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The Sealed Book

ONE of the marvels connected with the Bible is the way in which it supplies our need in every new emergency that arises. For many years it may be that some book seems remote and strange; it has no message for us, and we are puzzled that it should be there. Then a new set of circumstances confronts us and we find that precisely this book appeals to us more directly and poignantly than any other. The moment for which it was written and included among the other books in the Bible is come. So it is now with that great book which is printed last in the Bible. This article is an attempt to recover something of the experience which came to the Seer of the Apocalypse in the first vision in the Book of Revelation after the specific messages to the Seven Churches of Asia were ended.

"After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven" (iv, 1). I suppose a modern writer would say that he received in a blinding flash an apprehension of the true secret of reality—or something of that sort. The old language is more suggestive: "A door opened in heaven"; only he does not mean that there was a hole in the sky and he looked through it. In this apprehension all attention is held at first by the figure of the Heavenly King—a figure altogether made of light and glory, the white light of the jasper stone and the red light of the sardius, and, round about, the green light of the emerald (2, 3). This figure is as little anthropomorphic as any visual image of the Heavenly King could be; it is a figure of light and glory.

"And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones; and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting" (14)—the Church of all the ages, the Church of the Old Covenant or Old Testament, before its redemption in Christ, represented by the twelve Patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; and the Church of the New Covenant or New Testament, after its redemption in Christ, represented by the twelve Apostles; the four and twenty elders are the Church of all the ages.

" And in the midst before the throne and round about the throne were four living creatures " (6), which the passage in the Book of Ezekiel, from which the imagery is taken, shows to be the spirits who preside over created nature. They are " full of eyes ", for nature is so vigilant that she never lets one of her laws be broken. These spirits f nature are engaged in ceaseless adoration. " They have no rest day and night, saying, ' Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was and which is and which is to come ' " (8).

So far, perhaps, we feel that we can understand. When we look up at the sky on a starry night and reflect upon the majestic order of this vast universe, or when we study the intricate and delicate beauty of a wild flower or an insect's wing, and recollect that all this is due to the artistry of the Creator, then we realize that in very truth " the heavens declare the glory of God ", and are ready to acknowledge that nature exists to show forth His divinity.

And so far as we have any experience of worship, we find that in it we are lifted above the chances and changes of circumstance; the worshippers with whom we join are not the people, many or few, who are gathered in the same building, but when we lift up our hearts to the Lord, forthwith it is with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven that we laud and magnify His glorious Name.

That nature exists for God's glory, and that there is an unceasing worship offered by an eternal Church, in which at our best moments we can join—this we can believe. But what of the secular life of man, his age-long history with its wars and crimes ? Does not this stretch as an ugly blot across the fair face of God's creation ? Is there any way in which we can understand this ?

" And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals " (v, 1). The story is too long for the allotted space, and must run over, as we should say, on to the binding. For it is the long story of man's history and destiny. It is in the hand of the Heavenly King; but that is all that can be said, so far, about it. No one can interpret it; no one is worthy " to open the book or to loose the seals thereof " (2, 3). It is God's decree and there is no more to be said. That is Mohammedanism; Kismet—it is fated: to which the only human reaction is resignation—

Islam. St John tells that he " wept much " when he thought that was true (4). But one of the elders—a spokesman of the eternal Church—bids him not to weep. There is an interpreter of that book; it is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5). Judah was the Lion among the tribes in Jacob's blessing, and was also their sole survivor. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is therefore He in whom all the meaning and hope of the Old Covenant is gathered up.

St John looks to see this Lion—this figure of might. But there is no lion there. It is a Lamb—standing, and therefore alive, but with the marks of death upon Him, " standing, as though it had been slain "; for this is He who in an earlier vision said, " I am the first and the last and the living one; and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore ".

He takes the book, and forthwith the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders—nature and the Church—fall down before the Lamb and sing a new song: " Worthy art thou to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain " (8, 9). That is what qualifies Him. The death of Christ upon the Cross is the clue to the interpretation of human history. Then the whole universe boils over, so to speak, in an ecstasy of adoration. " And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, ' Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing '. And every created thing which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, ' Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever '."

What is left but that nature should give its solemn assent ? " The four living creatures said ' Amen '." What is left but that the Church should adore the Heavenly King and the Lamb ? " The elders fell down and worshipped " (14).

Perhaps at this point we are disposed to say that all this may have been credible in those roseate days before 1914, or even in the first few years after 1919; but not now. At those times it might be possible to believe that the course of human history is to be understood in the light of the love of God as made known by Christ upon the Cross. There

were evil things in the world, no doubt; but they were being remedied. The general tendency was in the right direction. History might be understood as the arena wherein Love progressively established itself against hatred, malice, and ill-will. But surely that is not to be said about the world we know so sadly well; surely it is not to be believed that this world is interpreted by the love of God made known in Christ?

It might be sufficient to reply by pointing to the world familiar to the writer of the Apocalypse. He certainly lived through, and may have actually written his book in, that terrible year of the four emperors, three of whom fought their way to the throne through rivers of blood. But it is more relevant to ask what was in the book when the seals were opened.

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, 'Come'." What comes? Well, it is what we call aggressive militarism. "And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer" (vi, 1, 2).

"And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, 'Come'." What comes? Battle. "And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (3, 4).

"And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, 'Come'." What comes? Famine. "And I saw, and behold, a black horse: and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, 'A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny'" (5, 6). A "penny", as we know from the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, was a labourer's full wage for a day; and this "measure" was what was calculated, for purposes of holding out in a siege, as just enough to keep body and soul together. Let a man give all he can earn and he may just live—maximum prices at their fiercest and worst.

"And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come'." What comes? Death and the grave. "And I saw, and behold, a pale

horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth " (7, 8).

Yes; it is our world, sure enough, that provides the contents of that book which was held by the Heavenly King, with all its horrors and terrors.

The four voices of nature have spoken and the scene shifts. Beneath the altar in heaven, that is in the place of the eternal sacrifice, are seen the souls of those who " had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held ". They are waiting. What for ? They are waiting till their successors—till we—shall offer our part of the great sacrifice (9-11).

" And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake " and all the customary concomitants of apocalyptic catastrophe (12-17), and then follows the vision of the " great multitude which no man could number standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes and palms in their hands " (vii, 9-17).

viii, 1: " And when he opened the seventh seal "—we expect a description of the blessed life to which these triumphant ones are admitted as the goal of their endurance; but no: " when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour ", for

> That eternal blazon must not be
> To ears of flesh and blood.

As the book proceeds there arises over against the figure of the Lamb, which stands for love using sacrifice as its instrument, the figure of the Wild Beast (xiii, 1), which stands for pride using force as its instrument. And these two principles, represented by the Lamb and the Wild Beast, work out in two civilizations. Pride, using force as its instrument, works out into Babylon the Great, which comes tumbling down; and as often as men build it up it comes tumbling down again (xvii, xviii). And love, of which the instrument is sacrifice, works out into " the holy city, new Jerusalem ", which comes, when it comes and in whatsoever degree it comes, from one source only—" out of heaven from God " (xxi, 2).

Thus the Book of Revelation supplies a clue to the interpretation of history and a criterion of progress. The inner

meaning of history is the conflict between the Lamb and the Wild Beast—love and pride. This alone gives real significance to politics and diplomacies and wars. Progress consists in the increase of love and goodwill at the expense of pride and violence. We are inclined to think that every new invention is a contribution to progress; and, of course, it can be so. But will anyone dare to say in this year 1941 that mankind is either better or happier because men have learnt to fly? Some day we may hope that aviation will appear as a contribution to progress; but that day is not yet. Whether or not such an invention marks a stage in progress depends on the use which we make of it. Only the increase of love is real progress.

The crucial moment in the vision which we have considered is that when the Seer looks for the Lion and finds the Lamb. For the Lamb is stronger than the Lion; He is more truly the figure of might. The Lion represents force. How does force produce its effects? Only in two ways: one is accident, as when a boulder rolls down a mountain-side and obliterates a traveller passing below; the other is in giving effect to human purpose under human direction. If, then, there is any power which can control the wills of men, that power will also control the force which men utilize.

Is there any such power? Yes; one, and only one. It is love expressing itself in sacrifice. The tyrant can so use the force at his disposal as to control my conduct; but he cannot control my will. If I serve him, it is against my will. When God made men with free hearts and wills, He committed Himself to the way of the Cross as the only way by which He could be omnipotent; unless He so loved the world and showed His love, there would be something that escaped His control: He would not be All-Ruler.

When you give a present to a friend, you are perfectly free; your own will chooses to give the present and what present to give. Yet your whole action is determined by the pleasure of the friend for whom the present is intended. And the giving of a present is a form of sacrifice, for the principle of sacrifice is that for love's sake we choose to do or suffer what, apart from love, we should not choose to do or suffer. It need not be painful. Indeed, when the sacrifice is accepted with gratitude and the love which prompts it is returned, it is the most delightful thing in life. And such sacrifice is the fundamental principle of the life of heaven.

But in this selfish world the sacrifice of love must be painful; and it is the very pain of it which makes it fruitful. No one is indifferent when he discovers that some one loves him enough to suffer willingly on his behalf. He may not be so moved as to change his conduct or his character all at once, but he cannot be unmoved.

Here is a way by which God may control the free hearts and wills that He has made without destroying their freedom. Here is the one way by which He can direct them through their freedom. It cannot be guaranteed that all will respond; but if He is to be Almighty it must be in this way.

There is no promise in this book or anywhere else in Scripture that a day will come when on this earth the victory of love is complete, nor even that hereafter all men will open their hearts to the love of God and let it direct their purposes. If we hope for that it is because we shrink from the thought that God may fail in His purpose for any human soul. But if the outcome is and must remain uncertain so far as our knowledge goes, the issue at stake is clear. Two powers are at grips in human history: love and pride. For each several soul, for every nation, for mankind itself, welfare consists in the supremacy of love, and progress is advance towards that goal. Set in the midst of history as the focus and source of the power that can carry us forward is the Cross; every true sacrifice endured and offered in service of a good cause is part of the moving power of progress, and those who endure and offer it have found the secret of life and the joy of heaven. The meaning of history is the triumph of the Lamb that was slain. "Behold, the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world."

WILLIAM EBOR:

The Nature and Task of Theology—I

"The worthiest occupation of the Wise, in these days, is to 'dig again the wells which the Philistines have filled'."[1]

THE articles and letters which have appeared in this journal during the past year on the subject of the present state and future prospects of Anglican theology have

[1] Coventry Patmore, *The Rod, the Root, and the Flower*, Aurea Dicta, cxxxix.

revealed very marked divergences of outlook and equally marked difficulties of mutual comprehension. This fact might not unreasonably cause one to wonder whether the real problem may not lie much deeper down than has so far been recognized, and whether there may not be considerable obscurity of mind as to the nature of theological science itself. Such a suspicion finds some confirmation from the difficulty that is experienced if one attempts to find any detailed examination or exposition by modern Anglican theologians of this fundamental question of what theology really is.[1] I have therefore ventured, with much trepidation, to try to think out this matter myself; and the present article represents the result both of my own thought and of considerable discussion with others whose minds have been exercised by the same question. I am very conscious of the impression of self-confidence, and even of arrogance, which such an attempt may give, especially in view of the appearance of dogmatism and over-simplification which is inevitable when a very large and complicated subject has to be dealt with in a comparatively small space. It will be abundantly evident that many points have been raised and dismissed in a few lines which, if treated exhaustively, might each require an article, or even a treatise, to itself.

To determine the exact nature of a science we need to answer three questions about it. They are the following: What is it ultimately about? What is the material upon which it has to work? What are the instruments which it is to use? Or, more briefly still: Where do we want to go? Where must we start? What is the path that we must take? These will be considered in order.

What is Theology About?

Geography is about maps,
Biography is about chaps,

sang Mr E. C. Bentley. But what is theology about? There would presumably be fairly general agreement in

[1] None of the following well-known works, for example, pay any serious attention to it: *The Thirty-nine Articles*, by E. C. S. Gibson; *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, by Darwell Stone; *Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles*, by E. J. Bicknell; *Christian Theology*, by A. C. Headlam; *Doctrines of the Creed*, by O. C. Quick. And the long article by Dr N. P. Williams entitled "What is Theology?" in *The Study of Theology* consists merely of a very full summary of the various divisions of the science.

theory with the definition given by St Thomas Aquinas that the object (strictly speaking, the material object) of theology is, primarily, God; and, secondarily, created things in their relation to Him.[1] In practice, however, this has been largely forgotten. "The 'theology' which is taught in the now undenominationalized faculties of modern universities . . .," writes Dr N. P. Williams, "is not so much the 'science of God' as the 'science of men's thoughts about God' ";[2] and this is, there can be little doubt, the main reason why it is generally felt to be irrelevant to everything that goes on at the present day. It appears to the modern layman to have as little relation to concrete fact as the Ptolemaic Theory of the Solar System or the Phlogistic Theory of combustion. It is not always realized how much of what is called theology to-day is at this second remove. The history of Christian dogma, liturgy, and ecclesiastical politics; the discussion of the authorship and contents of the books of the Bible; the comparative study of religions—all these sciences, which make up so large a part of theological syllabuses to-day, are of course of the highest interest and importance; but they are not in the strict sense *theology*, but rather sciences bearing upon it. And the other subject which finds a leading place in the syllabuses —namely, the philosophy of religion—is admitted usually only on the understanding that it rejects the traditional philosophical position of the Christian Church. As the Dean of King's College, London, has said: "Many Anglican theologians quote Aquinas (who was an orthodox Christian) with something very like apologies, grudgingly and with very limited understanding, while Kant (who was ashamed to pray) they will quote you with profound reverence, affectionately, almost as one of ourselves."[3] There is

[1] *Sum. Theol.*, I, i, 7. *Cf.* A. C. Headlam: "Theology is the science which teaches us about God. The term . . . is used for the science of God in the widest sense, so as to mean not only our knowledge of His being and nature, but also of His relation to the world and to man, of man's relation to Him, and of the relation of men to one another as dependent upon their relation to Him" (*Christian Theology*, pp. 1, 2). And F. J. Hall: "Sacred learning, or theology in its largest sense, is the science of divine things; and treats of God and of whatever in any manner pertains to Him, in so far as it does pertain to Him" (*Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, p. 10).

[2] "The Theology of the Catholic Revival" in *Northern Catholicism*, p. 131.

[3] "Mediæval Philosophy and Abailard," by R. Hanson, B.D., in *Laudate*, June, 1933, p. 73.

little hope that the non-theological world will cease to look on theology as (in the worst sense of the words) a purely academic study until theologians themselves begin once again to believe, as there are signs in various quarters that they are beginning to believe to-day, that theology is a living science intimately in touch with reality, through the pursuit of which men may be enabled to learn more and more, not merely of what people used to think about God in the days when religion was taken seriously, but of God Himself and the dealings which He has with His creatures. Only too often theologians seem to hold much the same view of their science as the young research student in Mr Charles Williams's novel, *The Place of the Lion*, held of hers. She was passionately interested in the doctrines of the *eidola* and the *angeli* without having any definite belief about either. But the only justification for theology is that it tells us about God, and the first thing that the theologian must be convinced of is that it can.

What is the Material of Theology?

Traditionally, it has been universally recognized that the raw material of theology is the supernatural revelation given by God to men in Christ and the Church, a revelation to which the unaided powers of the human mind, whether exercised in the mode of reason or in that of "religious experience", cannot attain. This accounts for the stress which is laid by St Paul on "the Revelation of the Mystery". "By revelation," he writes to the Ephesians, "was made known unto me the Mystery . . . which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men," and he speaks in almost the same words to the Colossians, the Romans, and the Corinthians.[1] St Peter and St John teach the same truth, although in different words.[2] Christian truth, on which theology is to be based, is therefore not something discovered by man, but something revealed to man by God. But two points need stressing in this connexion.

The first point is that in this revelation the Old Testament is an essential, though a preparatory, element. *Novum testamentum in vetere latet; vetus testamentum in novo patet.* Any attempt to separate the New Testament from the Old

[1] Eph. iii, 3, 5. *Cf.* Col. i, 25, 26; Rom. xvi, 25, 26; 1 Cor. ii, 7, 10.
[2] 1 Pet. i, 12; 1 John i, 2.

breaks down at once if one asks the question: What is the view of the Old Testament that the New Testament itself holds, the view, for example, that is implied by the use made of the Old Testament Scriptures in such books as St Matthew's and St John's Gospels and the Epistle to the Hebrews?

The second point is that the revelation, which is given primarily in the hypostatic union of human nature with God the Word, in Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, needs to be formulated in terms of human speech before it can become the material of theology. And this formulation of revelation in human words falls into two clearly distinguishable parts—the inspiration of Holy Scripture and the definition of dogma. Each of these is, in its own special way, the work of the Holy Spirit.

From an *a priori* standpoint there might seem to be no need for a divinely-inspired Bible at all. Why, in addition to the personal revelation of Himself to man which God has given us in the Incarnation of the Divine Word, should there be a written revelation consisting of the most astonishingly diverse collection of documents composed over a period of many centuries? Many answers have been, and can be, given to this objection; this is hardly the place to set them out. But it is not, perhaps, irrelevant to remark that, when all has been said for and against the need or the congruity of a written revelation, the ultimate reason for accepting the Bible is that it has been given us by God. "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform", and, as He has seen fit to give us the Bible, we shall do better to receive it in humility from His hands and try to understand it than to discuss at great length whether it was really necessary and, if so, whether it fulfils its purpose as well as we might have hoped.[1] An Anglican, at any rate, need hardly apologize, in the face of Articles VI and VII, for emphasizing the fundamental importance of Holy Scripture. But it is abundantly clear that the Bible does not provide us with a neatly-arranged body of theological definitions; the futility of any attempt to treat it in this way is shown by the amazing variety of conflicting doctrines which have been alleged to be the plain and indisputable teaching of the Bible. The Bible is rather like a mine from which

[1] It should hardly be necessary to remark that this does not imply a denial of the legitimacy of critical study of the Bible.

precious ore can be quarried than like the articles made out of the extracted metal. The work of quarrying, extracting, refining, and moulding is again the work of the Holy Spirit, but here He acts not through inspired individual writers, but through the Church, which is the Spirit-bearing Body through whose decisions, explicit or tacit, divine truth becomes formulated as dogma.

We can, as a matter of history, see in the life of the Church the process of the gradual formulation of dogma, in which the human instruments[1] are Councils, Fathers, liturgical formularies, and the general consciousness of the faithful, and in which the Spirit not only makes use of these instruments to express divine truth, but also guides the body of the Church to discriminate between councils which are authoritative and those which are spurious, between fathers and heretics, and between widely-held views which express the genuine insight of the Spirit-bearing Body and those that are temporary aberrations from the Church's own mind.

We must be careful, however, not to over-simplify a very intricate question by assuming that Scripture must be complete before dogma can begin to be formulated, or that the formulation of dogma must be complete before the theologian can begin to theologize. Such a suggestion would be ridiculous; in both the writing of Scripture and the formulation of dogma theologians have played their part, as witness such conspicuous examples as St Paul, St John, St Athanasius, and the Cappadocian Fathers. And, indeed, while the Canon of Scripture is presumably closed, the formulation of dogma still goes on. It is none the less true that the Church has always appealed to Scripture in support of her teaching, and that orthodox theologians have always taken as their starting-point the already existing defined and accepted dogma of the Christian Church. We are not, therefore, forgetting the extremely elaborate interrelations between Scripture, dogma, and theology when we define the material upon which the theologian has to work as being primarily the divine revelation (*revelatum, donné révélé*), which comes to him as rooted

[1] The word "instrument" must not be taken as implying the annihilation of the free-will of the human beings concerned. God uses all His instruments according to their particular natures. Paradoxical as it may sound, the man who is most under the control of God is the man whose freedom is most fully operative.

in Scripture and as to a greater or less degree formulated as dogma.

In insisting on the divine revelation as the material of Christian theology we must not overlook the existence of what has been commonly called *natural theology*. There *is* a certain knowledge of God attainable without revelation, as St Paul recognized in the Epistle to the Romans. It is precisely because " the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made ", that the Gentiles who, " knowing God, glorified Him not as God " are " without excuse ".[1] This knowledge of God which is accessible to the human reason is, however, partial and insufficient; that is, among other reasons, why God has revealed Himself in Christ. Furthermore, man's natural powers are themselves weakened through sin, and so his natural knowledge of God is, even in its own order, clouded and distorted; one need not be a Calvinist to recognize that man is not only *spoliatus gratuitis*, but also *vulneratus in naturalibus*.[2] It is this that has caused so much attention to be given in recent years to the problem of a Christian philosophy. If philosophy (of which natural theology is a part) is the work of reason and not of revelation, how can it make any difference to a man's philosophy whether he is a Christian or not? How are we to account for the difference between the natural theology of an Aristotle and an Aquinas? This question has been discussed more or less independently by both M. Maritain and M. Gilson, and the answers that they give are, shorn of technicalities, substantially the same.[3] It is that grace not only supplies perfections which lie above the level of nature, but also restores nature to its own integrity. *Gratia* is *sanans* as well as *elevans*. It follows, therefore, that while in principle there is a certain limited knowledge of God which is accessible to the human reason as such, in practice it is only in the light of revelation and under the assistance of grace that the human reason can function adequately and can obtain, even within its own proper limits, a knowledge of God which is free from

[1] Rom. i, 20, 21.

[2] See, in support of this contention, the letter by Fr Victor White, O.P., in THEOLOGY, April, 1940, p. 292.

[3] J. Maritain, *De la philosophie chrétienne*; E. Gilson, *Christianisme et Philosophie*. *Cf.* also E. Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, ch. i, ii.

error. Philosophy and theology[1] are thus in the abstract autonomous, being concerned respectively with the sphere of reason and nature and with the sphere of revelation and grace, but in the concrete a true philosophy can only be developed in the light of the Christian revelation. This is the truth which St Augustine expressed in his famous sentence, *Verus philosophus est amator Dei*, and which lay behind the refusal of St Bonaventure and the Franciscans generally to draw a clear-cut line between philosophy and theology, but it is no less involved in the position of their Aristotelian and Dominican opponents. It provides the explanation of the extraordinary change that came over Aristotelianism in the hands of St Thomas, with his doctrine of a personal, conscious God and of the immortality of the individual human soul.

The distinction between natural and revealed theology was universal in traditional Anglicanism; Bishop Butler's famous *Analogy* is only one instance of it. In the Liberal period, however, the tendency grew up to look upon the difference between the two as merely one of degree, or at least to assume that they ought not to be made into two distinct sciences. Sometimes, of course, this was due to a desire to whittle away the uniqueness of the Christian revelation; it went with the view that Jesus of Nazareth, so far from being the Son of God in any metaphysical sense, was only the supreme product of human evolution. But it was present even where this heresy of the evolutionary Christ was absent, and the reason seems to lie in a curious assumption that, if two things always occur together, however different their proportions may be in different instances, they must be really identical or that, at any rate, it is illicit to discuss them separately. Such a denial of the principle of abstraction really makes science impossible. As any physical scientist knows, it is quite futile to attempt to discuss any complicated problem without having previously dissected out from it certain simpler problems which do not exactly correspond to any real occurrence. In electrodynamics, it is customary to discuss the properties of electric circuits with resistance but no self-induction, and of those with self-induction but no resistance, in spite of the fact that every

[1] "Theology" here, as generally throughout this article, means revealed theology; natural theology is, as we have seen, a part of philosophy.

circuit has both; in hydrodynamics, the study of non-viscous liquids invariably precedes the study of viscous liquids, although every liquid found in nature has some viscosity, however small it may be in particular cases. The Report of the Archbishops' Doctrinal Commission is perfectly correct in asserting that " there is a factor in our knowledge of God due to reflection on the general nature of experience ", and that " there is also a factor due to the apprehension of individual historical facts through which God reveals Himself to man in a special manner or degree ", but it quite misses the point when it argues from this that " the body of Christian doctrine, however, cannot be split up into two portions assignable respectively to those two factors, as though such doctrines as those of God's unity and of His moral government of the world were assignable exclusively to the first, and the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and gift of supernatural grace to the second ", and this on the ground that " the two factors which we have recognized, while distinguishable, are always inter-dependent ".[1] It is precisely because the two factors are distinguishable that they have to be considered separately, though it is of course necessary to recognize their inter-relations. After all, the plain fact is that God's unity and His moral government of the world are believed in by many non-Christians, while the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and supernatural grace (in the Christian sense of " the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ") are not. And if we refuse to make a separate study of these latter doctrines, we shall be in grave danger of confusing the " general revelation " made to all men in virtue of the fact that they are created in the image of the Divine Logos, who is the " Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world ",[2] with the " special revelation " (that is, revelation in the strict and proper sense in which it is being taken in this article) given " at sundry times and in divers manners "[3] to the Chosen People and culminating in the personal manifestation of the Word-made-flesh. And so doing we shall be led into a conscious or unconscious denial of the uniqueness of the Incarnation.

The mutual relations of natural and revealed theology were described with force and humour by Abbot Chapman in one of his letters. " It is obviously not possible *in*

[1] *Doctrine in the Church of England*, p. 44. [2] John i, 9. [3] Heb. i, 1.

practice," he wrote, " to disentangle the Supernatural from the Natural. The two are warp and woof from which our whole experience is woven. But it *is* possible to do so *in theory*, and SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY deals ONLY with the Natural, and therefore not with life in all its complexity as we know it, but with the world as it would be without revelation and without grace (of all kinds) which are disturbing factors." Again: " The crucial instance of this abstract nature of pure philosophy is in *Natural Theology*, which is a *part* of philosophy; its subject-matter is what man can know of God *without revelation and without grace*; whereas it is (really) OF FAITH that it is within the power of every man to have divine faith (of some kind) and that no one is ever without ' sufficient grace ' . . . Consequently there is not and never has been in the world such a monster as a professor of purely natural religion. A human being falls lower or rises higher, but is never a simply *natural* man."[1]

Christian theology has thus a twofold material upon which to work—namely, the deliverances of natural knowledge and the revelation given by God in Christ, which latter comes to the theologian, through the medium of Scripture, to a very great extent formulated as dogma. The relation between these two, which is both delicate and intricate, is simply one of the many cases of the relation between nature and grace. Logically, natural knowledge is prior to revelation, for grace presupposes nature as that in which grace works: " First that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual."[2] But, in the concrete, revelation has priority over natural knowledge, for in a fallen world grace has not only to supply what lies outside the intrinsic powers of nature, but has also to restore the powers of nature to their own integrity.

E. L. MASCALL, O.G.S.

(*To be concluded.*)

[1] *The Spiritual Letters of Dom John Chapman*, pp. 192, 193. It is clear that by "professor" Abbot Chapman means simply " one who professes", not the occupant of a chair at a university.

[2] 1 Cor. xv, 46.

W. B. Yeats

I

In the hierarchy of men who have made great verse in English an exalted place must be kept for William Yeats. So much may be said with assurance, even by a critic who would hesitate to speak with more precision. For in praising or blaming a writer so contemporary as Yeats we are constantly in danger of merely flattering our own prejudices or attempting to appease our guilty conscience. Our grandchildren will see more clearly than we what was of lasting value in Yeats, and what was merely local in time or in place. We had better rest content to accept his own proud boast:

> There is not a fool can call me friend,
> And I may dine at journey's end
> With Landor and with Donne.[1]

His importance to this generation has already been admirably defined by critics like Dr Leavis and Mr Edmund Wilson.[2] Nor could any exposition be half so profitable as that provided by Yeats himself; and his various autobiographical writings, apart from their great intrinsic fascination, may be considered an almost essential study for anyone who would understand the poet. This essay does not repeat except incidentally the distinguished critics named above; but neither does it claim to supersede them. Its aim is to interest Christian readers in the work of a great pagan writer, and to mention some of the problems he seems to raise.

II

To say that Yeats is not a Christian poet is not to imply that Christian readers will find no profit in his work. The poet as poet needs a supernatural scheme so that he may give to the events of natural life a form, a meaning and a value; but to criticize a poet it is never enough, and it is often irrelevant, to criticize his theology. The stuff of his poetry is the emotion, or state of mind, it communicates, and it is

[1] All poems quoted will be found in *Collected Poems* (1933), or in *Last Poems* (1940).

[2] *New Bearings in English Poetry*, by F. R. Leavis; *Axel's Castle*, by Edmund Wilson.

this we must attempt to judge. Yeats based his best verse on an "explanation of life" that is not the Christian explanation. But his best verse does not achieve its effect by manipulating these private doctrines, and a Christian may approach it as easily as an infidel may approach Racine.

Nor is Yeats a religious poet, except in a somewhat limited sense. One of the characters in "A Vision" remarks: "Mr Yeats has intellectual belief, but he is entirely without moral faith, without that sense, that should come to a man with terror and joy, of a divine presence."[1] And though he is constantly preoccupied with the supernatural, and complains of being "deprived by Huxley and Tyndall whom I detested of the simple-minded religion of my childhood",[2] this preoccupation is æsthetic rather than moral.

> The woods of Arcady are dead,
> And over is their antique joy;
> Of old the world on dreaming fed;
> Grey truth is now her painted toy.

Thus his first published lines deplore the rationalism of the post-Cartesian world. But we note that the antithesis is between "dreaming" and "grey truth": an æsthetic not a moral complaint. Son of a Pre-Raphaelite painter, friend of Oscar Wilde and Lionel Johnson, he belonged to a generation that hated most in the modern world its ugliness, and its concern with practical success. And though he survived the Rhymers' Club, and several other generations of poets as well, he never lost the veneration for "pure art" he acquired in early youth.

Moreover, if his attitude to religion was æsthetic rather than moral, so was his attitude to morals. The last generation of poets to count themselves his contemporaries was that group of political writers that included Mr Auden and Mr Day-Lewis. And of these he wrote: "Communism is their *deus ex machina*, their happy ending, but *speaking as a poet* I prefer tragedy to tragi-comedy."[3] Now the subject of discussion here is essentially a moral one: Can Utopia be achieved on earth? But Yeats' approach to it is purely

[1] *A Vision* (privately printed, London, 1925), p. xxii.

[2] Unless otherwise stated, all prose quotations are from *Autobiographies* (1926).

[3] *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936), Introd., p. xxxvii.

æsthetic: he is *speaking as a poet*, and he expresses not an opinion but a preference. In 1909 he wrote: " The Abbey Theatre will fail because there is no accepted authority to explain why the more difficult pleasure is the nobler pleasure," and he spoke of the need for an absolute morality, not one that sets " out to make shopkeepers ".[1] These remarks are symptomatic. Like a score of modern writers from Matthew Arnold to Mr I. A. Richards, his first concern is with culture and civilization, of which religion and codes of high morality are seen to be the necessary props. For civilizations are not born of man's craving for art and philosophy. Most of us have only a limited appetite for these things, and to attract the mass of mankind they must be recommended by some accepted authority.

The long heroic tradition of Irish Nationalist idealism seemed, Yeats thought, to promise such authority. He tells of John O'Leary, the hero of his youth, who " had joined the Fenian Movement with no hope of success, but because he believed it would be good for the moral character of the people; and he had taken his long imprisonment without complaining. I have heard him say, 'A man must not cry in public to save a nation.' " Yeats hoped, moreover, " to transmute the anti-English passion of the Fenians into a passion of hatred against the vulgarity and materialism whereon England had founded her worst life ",[2] into hatred, that is, of all that Ruskin and William Morris had denounced. The lull in politics after Parnell's death gave him his chance to try. The Irish National Literary Movement was founded, and presently the Dublin Abbey Theatre; and for a few years the things of culture and the intellect supplanted politics in the public mind. Such a plan could have been conceived only by a man rich in intelligence, imagination and courage: it was nothing less than an attempt to manipulate the strongest political forces of his time and use them for the extra-political ends of civilization. The attempt failed, or at least its success was less than Yeats had dreamed. It gave to Ireland the beginnings of a great literature; it could not give her a new civilization. No stable culture can be built on Nationalism alone; for Nationalism attains the pitch of religious fervour only when a country is oppressed or at war; it lacks the permanence of true religion, for which it can never be a substitute. The

[1] *Dramatis Personæ* (1936), p. 109. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

heroic Fenian tradition could flourish only while England retained the government of Ireland; and, indeed, after Parnell's fall it seemed dead already. " Under the shadow of Parnell power passed to small shopkeepers and clerks, men who had risen above the traditions of the country without learning those of cultivated life, and who, because of their poverty and ignorance, are much subject to all kinds of fear."[1] The vulgarity denounced by Ruskin had begun to permeate Irish life as well.

> What need you, being come to sense,
> But fumble in a greasy till
> And add the halfpence to the pence
> And prayer to shivering prayer, until
> You have dried the marrow from the bone;
> For men were born to pray and save:
> Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
> It's with O'Leary in the grave.

III

Yeats started out, as Mr Eliot observes, " in search of a tradition ".[2] Now tradition means a technique of social living, regulated by custom and practised in common by a number of people who dwell in one place, and are united through allegiance to some one philosophy or religion. Their philosophy should give them a justification of the state, a vindication of the non-economic activities pertaining to culture, and, most important of all, a pattern of virtuous living, some incentive for a life of high endeavour. Such a tradition patriotism could not provide; nor could the myths of Celtic Ireland acquire vitality, though Yeats made them the theme of his verse, and Lady Gregory put them on the stage. Mr Eliot quotes the lines beginning:

> Who will go drive with Fergus now?

and remarks that they are beautiful but artificial. If they are artificial it is because they deal with a supernatural world that has no link with the world we inhabit, and can therefore furnish no pattern and no incentive for virtuous living. Christian civilizations have existed in the past

[1] *Essays* (1925), p. 317.
[2] The quotations from Mr Eliot are from *After Strange Gods* (1934).

because Christianity is a morally relevant religion. Nor can any state of high civilization persist without such a religious foundation. The experience of Yeats is a fact of contemporary, not of mere historical, importance. For in a period of religious decay, men and nations must look for strength where they can, and the patriotic or racial idea does provide great strength of a limited kind.

Foiled in the search for a tradition, Yeats fell back on the sources of strength his own strong character could provide. In *Responsibilities* (1914), the first volume of his poetic maturity, there is a poem addressed *To a friend whose work has come to nothing*. She has failed, he says, by the world's standards, who measure only tangible achievements. But she has been bred to seek honour first, a harder but a nobler end than triumph, and the poem ends with an exhortation:

> Amid a place of stone
> Be silent and exult,
> Because of all things known
> That is most difficult.

The doctrine of " Art for Art's sake " is here transposed to the field of morality. (The keyword is " because " in the third line.) The fact that an achievement is difficult is to be considered sufficient reason for attempting it. Now this is an extremely hard, because a most unreasonable, doctrine, and in practice it proves almost impossible to sustain. Yeats' most successful realization of a self-supporting heroism is in the famous poem *An Irish Airman foresees his death*. Now a Christian may prefer death to apostasy, but the merit of his cause, not the hardness of his task, provides his justification and his strength. But the Irish airman is facing death not from patriotism or duty—it is England's war, not his:

> A lonely impulse of delight
> Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
> I balanced all, brought all to mind ;
> The years to come seemed waste of breath,
> A waste of breath the years behind
> In balance with this life, this death.

Again note the æsthetic nature of the choice: it is an impulse of *delight*. But the Irish airman is a somewhat shadowy figure; and Yeats finds he needs other spurs to activity

besides the mere " fascination of what's difficult ". He thinks much about the high achievements of his ancestors:

> Merchant and soldier who have left me blood
> That has not passed through any huckster's loin,
> Soldiers that gave whatever die was cast;

and of his racial ancestors, the great Anglo-Irishmen of the eighteenth century:

> People that were
> Bound neither to cause nor to state,
> Neither to slaves that were spat on
> Nor to the tyrants that spat;
> The people of Burke and of Grattan
> That gave though free to refuse.

Now the past is here being used to sustain the courage of the present; and that is only possible because the past had a source of strength that the present has lost. " Goldsmith and Burke, Swift and the Bishop of Cloyne " enjoyed the benefits of revealed religion: and strength derived from contemplating them is really strength derived at second-hand from a Christian tradition.

Conversion would seem to be the next logical step in the poet's history; and much of the later verse is concerned, if not precisely with conversion, at least with the problem of personal sanctity:

> In tombs of gold and lapis lazuli
> Bodies of holy men and women exude
> Miraculous oil, odour of violet.

But the logical step is not always the easy one: it may even be impossible. (There is a state of mind known to theologians as invincible ignorance.) And in a late poem Yeats addresses a great Christian philosopher only to bid him farewell:

> Must we part, Von Hügel, though much alike, for we
> Accept the miracles of the saints and honour sanctity ?

The poet's own conclusion is that they must part: for he, the pagan, plays a predestined role:

> Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.
> The lion and the honeycomb, what hath scripture said ?
> So get you gone, Von Hügel, but with blessings on your head.

The tone is one of wistful agnosticism, for the poet considered himself to be in a state of invincible ignorance, and it is

perhaps not for us to comment or judge. But the precise nature of his dilemma may be better understood if we examine another late poem, *The Choice*.

> The intellect of man is forced to choose
> Perfection of the life or of the work,
> And if it take the second must refuse
> A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.

Yeats conceives two possible objects of self-dedication: " perfection of the life ", which means personal sanctity, or " perfection of the work ", which means making great poetry. These objects are not necessarily incompatible (they were not for Dante). But a poet can only write about his beliefs and experiences, about the things he has admired or despised. Conversion, as Mr Eliot says, will not " do for a man, as a writer, what his ancestry and country for some generations have failed to do ". And Christian poets have to be made as well as born: Dante was part of a living Catholic tradition. Yeats grew up in a very different environment. Having lost " the simple-minded faith of his childhood ", he made for himself in the course of years a sort of pseudo-religion, consisting of Irish folk-lore, memories of relations and ancestors, and of various high, proud people he had known. His very speech reflects private beliefs. In a poem about a dying lady, written just after the war, he speaks of the time

> When her soul flies to the predestined dancing-place,

and adds:

> I have no speech but symbol, the pagan speech I made
> Amid the dreams of youth.

His term for the life after death is incompatible with Christian belief. Conversion would require him to remake all his accustomed mental images and to find a new vocabulary—in fact, to scrap the instruments for verse-making that it took thirty years to make. His choice was between a sterile old age as a poet and a pagan old age as a man; he preferred to write poetry.

In a Christian man's character courage and disinterested service are valuable qualities, provided they are dedicated to worthy objects. But by taking them out of their Christian context Yeats comes to regard them as valuable in themselves, and this introduces a dangerous tendency: the tendency to value any emotion that is sufficiently strong or

violent. The Irish airman considered above acted with at least questionable morality, throwing away his life for a cause that neither duty nor interest bade him defend (how far his act differed from deliberate suicide, the moral theologians must decide). But to Yeats it is the gesture, not the morality, that is important, and in still later poems he shows a marked tendency to admire all men who are violent or even cruel. In one of the last poems, *Under Ben Bulben*, he writes:

> You that Mitchell's prayer have heard,
> " Send war in our time, O Lord !"
> Know that when all words are said
> And a man is fighting mad,
> Something drops from eyes long blind,
> He completes his partial mind,
> For an instant stands at ease,
> Laughs aloud, his heart at peace.

But it is only a tendency, and Yeats manages to keep it under control. Meditating on the Irish Civil War in a poem called *Ancestral Houses*, he contrasts the decayed vitality of the people that live in " gardens where the peacock strays " with the wild bitter vigour of the rebel soldiers, and he asks:

> What if those things the greatest of mankind
> Consider most to magnify, or to bless,
> But take our greatness with our bitterness ?

The same problem is frequently stated by D. H. Lawrence, but Lawrence, plumping for the vigorous " new men ", consigns the decayed gentleman to perdition. Yeats, a greater man than Lawrence, states the dilemma, but makes no final choice. In another poem, *The Second Coming*, he writes of the modern world where

> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are filled with passionate intensity.

The strength of Yeats' character is nowhere seen more clearly than in the use of those two contrasted words " best " and " worst ".

But in a society infected with liberalism, the divorce of virtue and vigour is an everyday experience, and lesser men, unless they are fortified by strong religious faith, are not likely to preserve a poise that even Yeats achieved only with difficulty. Popular educaton, the newspapers, films and radio supply the modern man with no religious convictions

or moral principles; they scarcely give him a coherent set of prejudices. Such people will readily become the instruments of any ruthless demagogue or faction; they are Mr Eliot's *Hollow Men*, and, being hollow, can act as channels for any diabolical force that wants them.[1] As far back as 1923, Yeats with a prophet's vision saw *Phantoms of Hatred and of the Heart's Fullness and of the Coming Emptiness*, that foreshadow the frenzy of the storm-trooper, and foretell the end of economic man:

" Vengeance upon the murderers," the cry goes up.
" Vengeance for Jacques Molay." In cloud-pale rags or in lace
The rage-driven, rage-tormented and rage-hungry troop,
Trooper belabouring trooper, biting at arm or at face,
Plunges towards nothing . . . and I, my wits astray
Because of all that senseless tumult, all but cried
For vengeance on the murderers of Jacques Molay.

And in a note on the last line he says: " A cry for vengeance for the Grand Master of the Templars seems to me fit symbol for those who labour from hatred, and so for sterility in various kinds."

Yeats reached the peak of his poetic achievement in *The Tower* (1928), and we will conclude by examining the first two poems in that collection. The first, *Sailing to Byzantium*, expresses an experience corresponding to Matthew Arnold's doctrine that poetry can save us. He begins by renouncing the world of sense (" That is no country for old men "), where

> Caught in that sensual music all neglect
> Monuments of unageing intellect.

And therefore he has come to Byzantium to steep himself in " monuments of its (*i.e.*, intellect's) own magnificence ". He invokes the sages of Byzantium:

> Consume my heart away; sick with desire
> And fastened to a dying animal
> It knows not what it is; and gather me
> Into the artifice of eternity.

This poem presents a calm, poised state of mind, as though the poet had found peace in works of intellect and art. But the poise is precarious. The next poem, *The Tower*,

[1] " A breed of mild pervasive cabbages has set up a wide and creeping rot in the West; it is the lost generations described in Chekov over again, that any resolute power will be able to wipe up overnight, with its eyes shut."—W. Lewis, *Tarr* (1928), p. 17.

opens with the same theme, but treats it in quite a different mood. The poet inveighs against old age:

> It seems that I must bid the muse go pack . . .
> Until imagination, ear and eye,
> Can be content with argument and deal
> In abstract things.

What in the earlier poem was invoked as the " artifice of eternity " is now become " argument " and " abstract things ", the recipe for a dull, lifeless existence. Intellect and Art do not, it would seem, provide the moral nourishment an old man needs. In the second section he invokes certain violent people—Mrs French, haughty aristocrat, whose servant once

> Ran and with the garden shears
> Clipped an insolent farmer's ears
> And brought them in a little silver dish;

a peasant girl that drove men mad with the beauty of her song; Red Hanrahan, the violent, lecherous poet invented by Yeats in younger days. Did all these people, he asks,

> Whether in public or in secret rage
> As I do now against old age?

The tone of the section is set by the word " rage "; the voice is the blasphemer's who has loved life, and is not content to lose it; and as he invokes the violent dead people, one thinks of Milton's Satan calling the toll of his rebel companions in Hell. The third section is written in brief, resolute lines; for the poet has gained confidence:

> It is time that I made my will;
> I choose upstanding men
> That climb the streams until
> The fountain leap,

and having named his heirs, he adds:

> I declare
> These shall inherit my pride.

Like Satan, his pride is his chief possession—indeed, it is his only one—and his later words do not ring true when he says:

> I have prepared my peace
> With learned Italian things.

For what are these but the " argument " and " abstract things " already renounced? In the course of two poems his

mood has changed three times. First he aspires to the super-temporal peace of great art; but art cannot replace the joys of youth, and his mood changes to an agony of rage because all things pass away. He then reflects that others have suffered and raged before, and as a gesture of despairing courage declares them his brethren in revolt. He ends the second poem as the first began:

> Now shall I make my soul,
> Compelling it to study
> In a learned school
> Till the wreck of body.

Like a caged lion he is moving in circles: and the hope to which he returns is a vain one, as he admits in one of his very last poems:

> You think it horrible that lust and rage
> Should dance attendance upon my old age.
> They were not such a plague when I was young;
> What else have I to spur me now to song?

His last confession shows him a moral bankrupt. Even the "pride like that of the morn" that was his only asset has lost its heroic dignity, reduced to its components "lust" and "rage".[1] Yet it is in poems like these that Yeats shows himself pre-eminent, and we should beware of feeling complacent as we read. The poetry is notable because it faces and admits the most terrible truths about the human soul; and honesty of this kind is achieved by only the very greatest poets. Lesser men will flatter their own complacency with pleasing fictions, or take refuge in self-pity, or turn their attention to other things. Honesty cannot by itself save a man's soul, but without it both humility and repentance are a sham. Dante, whom Yeats thought the chief of Christian poets, shared with him this honesty, and for Dante it was a prelude to repentance and the true peace of God:

> La sua voluntade e nostra pace.

Yeats was not destined to write a Paradiso.

G. D. P. Allt.

[1] "He that will secure his chastity, must first cure his pride and his rage. For oftentimes lust is the punishment of a proud man, to tame the vanity of his pride by the shame and affronts of unchastity; and the same intemperate heat that makes anger, does enkindle lust."—Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living*, chap. ii, § 3.

The War and Christian Reunion—I[1]

THERE is considerable discussion and disagreement at the moment as to whether this is or is not the time to debate the question of "peace aims". Whatever may be said about such peace aims in the narrower political or economic sense, there is one thing, it seems to me, which is indisputable. War on the scale on which we know it has the effect of upsetting more than the surface of an established order. Moreover, the present conflict is being waged on more than the political and economic level: it is a struggle in which conflicting and irreconcilable ways of life are engaged; in which religion is engaged. Nor is it a question simply of choosing between two opposing philosophies; the stage is held at the present time, not by two, but by four conflicting world-views. It seems to me, then, that in one sense at least we are bound to consider and discuss peace aims: we are bound to consider and discuss, collectively, as far as possible, which of these ways of life is the true way of life, and what are the fundamental principles of its application to political and economic affairs. Those principles are all concerned ultimately with the definition of man.

Three of the four world-views we have to consider are easy to name and to describe. They are Christianity, Fascism, and Marxist Communism. The fourth is more elusive. It is the world we ourselves in this country have inherited; or rather, perhaps, it is that world regarded, for the sake of discussion, in isolation from the considerable elements of Christianity which it still retains in a more or less diluted form. It is in the main the heritage of the change in the definition of man, and therefore of the world of man, which took place at the time of the Renaissance. God-centred humanism gave way to man-centred humanism; and then, by a rigorous logical process, humanism in its turn gave way to the aridities of rationalism, rationalism to scepticism; this in its turn implied the destruction of culture by materialism; and at the same time concern for the common good and the ideal of service and brotherhood gave way to egoism, individualism. The golden age of progress was loudly proclaimed, but failed to materialize; science, once so arrogant in face of the failure of philosophy, came to doubt

[1] A paper read to the East Midlands branch of the "Fellowship of Reconciliation", November 1, 1940.

the truth of its own principles. We were left with a world in which *laissez-faire* in economics and liberalist-individualism in politics were the chosen instruments of those who preached the coming of a better world, whose ideal, however, was predominantly materialist, measured in terms of money, efficiency, and material comfort; and the result in practice was not a new era of happiness, but an era of misery for the masses—a misery in which the chief ingredients were the widespread alienation of work and responsibility, the destruction of creativity, and the loss of economic freedom.

If that was the best that reason could do for man, then, it appeared to many, it would be better to do without reason and to try some other instrument for the forging of a decent world. Hence Fascism, which appeals away from reason to blind instinct; away from individual freedom to blind subservience to the superman, the state; away from the culture, the generosity, the love of wisdom for its own sake, which still vivified to a great extent the old order, to a régime of brute force in which the absolutes of truth and goodness are denied and derided, and learning and culture permitted only in so far as they can serve the material end of the state. Fascism is a step further—and a very long step further—in the degradation of the definition of man. Dostoievsky long ago warned a world which he saw to be standing on the edge of the abyss that man cannot remain man: he must either rise to something greater than humanity through submission to God, or he must destroy himself and become less than humanity. The world of liberal-individualist optimism tried precisely to remain man; Fascism has shown the results, or, rather, has wantonly accelerated the process which preceding ages began, and carried it to its hideous conclusion. We live in a world that Mr Eliot has described as " neutral " in regard to Christianity; here, again, Fascism has swept things to their conclusion: sensing the disastrous effects of a world in which absolutes are cold-shouldered, it affirms an absolute as the centre of its philosophy, denying God, indeed, openly and brutally, but setting up a false god in His stead, to be an object of worship and demanding complete self-abnegation. Our way of life is too complex to allow of accurate definition without falsifying the facts; but again in isolation from its Christian elements it can be described as a more or less anti-absolutist individualist rationalism. Fascism is its opposite: an anti-rational state absolutism.

Marxism attempted to deny the absolute, and to remedy the evils of individualism, without destroying reason. Let us call it an anti-absolutist collectivist rationalism. It certainly cannot be left out of the contemporary scene; for it will certainly wish to impose itself upon an exhausted world when the struggle is over.

Christianity stands over against all three combatants, though in different degrees of opposition. It condemns the pseudo-absolute of Fascist state-worship in the name of God; it condemns the Fascist cult of brute force and instinct in the name also of reason; it condemns Fascist statism in the name also of the dignity of the human person; it condemns the materialism, and the attenuated rationalism, of Marxism and of capitalism alike; it condemns individualism in the name of the common good, and collectivism in the name of the individual human person; it condemns the tyranny which imposes duties and acknowledges no rights; it condemns the individualism which claims rights and ignores duties. It has its own affirmations to make: they are clear-cut and emphatic, and they cut right across the rivalries of the modern world. It affirms that man is born to be free; but that he can find freedom only in submission to and union with God, and in service of and union with men. It affirms that the human person is what is of supreme value among earthly things; that the person has definite inalienable rights with which no earthly authority may interfere; it asserts that the state is for the person, and not the person for the state. Yet it affirms also that man cannot be perfect man except through service and brotherhood, the service of brotherhood. It affirms, therefore, that freedom and authority are not contradictory, but complementary; that man is only man in so far as he recognizes the authority of God; and that the common good can be achieved only by recognition of the authority of rulers, themselves obedient to the law of nature and of God; but that also there can be no obedience where there is coercion, for obedience is a virtue which only the free man can practise. The world of industrial capitalism is sub-human because it robs the individual of his creativity, his freedom, and at the same time of his power to build up the common good;[1] and it does this in the name of a liberty which, in fact, being defined simply

[1] This latter is not true of times of crisis; but it is not times of crisis alone that determine the character of a society.

in terms of absence of restraint, is not liberty at all. Fascism is sub-human and anti-human because it also robs the individual of his freedom and of his power to build up the common good; but it does so in the name of an authority which, because it excludes freedom, excludes obedience, and so is not authority at all. Christianity teaches that man becomes truly free by being divinized through God's grace; and to be divinized, to become one with God, means the interiorization of the law of God, to become one in will with God: to obey, therefore, but to obey in the true sense, to obey freely. "Let charity make thee a slave," said Augustine, "since Truth hath made thee free."

Now it would obviously be idle for the Fascist to discuss peace aims in any but the most material and superficial sense, because the Fascist world-view is already quite set and determined. But the same is not true of our world. It is, on the contrary, in a state of fluidity. Many different elements go to make it up as we inherited it; many conflicting elements are attempting now, or will attempt, to determine its character in the future. There are the diehard individualists; there are those who still pin their faith to science, unaware that science can never tell us what to do, but only how to do it; there are the Marxists; there are those of more or less Fascist leanings. But Christianity is none of these things; the trouble, the scandal and the tragedy is that we Christians too often in practice are. But the immediate moral is obvious. We are bound to look upon the war in a spirit of repentance and sorrow: we cannot blandly foist on to others the blame for the collapse of Christendom. But repentance implies the determination to do better in the future. War is a scourge; it may indirectly present an opportunity. The very fact of the upheaval of our world may mean an opportunity to build another and a better world. The responsibility is commensurate with the opportunity. And in so far as the world we have known is not merely upset superficially, but rocked to its foundations; in so far as it is not merely economic or political or even cultural principles that are at stake, but the very existence of the spirit, the definition of man, the belief in God, our responsibility cannot be exaggerated. We cannot but pray, of course, that God will spare us the horror of a world delivered up to sub-humanity, lost in the night of Nazism. But we have also to ask ourselves whether the world that we ourselves shall build will be again, itself, a world of sub-

humanity, though of a different kind; whether it will slide from religious "neutrality" to confessed atheism and materialism; or whether, on the other hand, it will be a new world in the sense of a really renewed world, renewed by faith and love and worship.

It is in this context that the division of Christendom is seen in the fulness of its tragedy. We cannot exercise the influence we should, because we cannot speak with one voice. And, indeed, too often, when we should be collaborating together in the full strength of all that we hold in common, collaborating to defend at all costs the things that are most fundamental, most essential to human life, we find ourselves, on the contrary, wasting our energies, and causing scandal to non-Christians, by bickering among ourselves. If we do that, we are not merely fiddling while Rome burns; we are fanning the flames. There is no problem more terribly urgent than the problem of the unity of Christendom. Clearly, the problem cannot be solved in a day. But there is much that can be done, and ought to be done, at once.

Gerald Vann, O.P.

(*To be concluded.*)

". . . but the Children are so Hopeful"

This cliché was first spoken in my hearing at a meeting of my college's Theological Debating Society in my undergraduate days. The subject under discussion was "The Church and the Masses". Several sober dignitaries, who were invited speakers, spoke as sober dignitaries are apt to speak. They said that, although on the one hand it was greatly to be feared that the Church had to some extent lost her hold upon the men and women of the working classes, yet on the other hand all was not lost, for had she not still the children, and "the children are so hopeful" as the adult Church members of the next generation. The sentiment evoked the comfortable applause that such a sentiment, when pronounced by a dignitary with dignified enunciation, always does evoke. But then arose Robert Dolling of Portsea, and poured a flood of hard facts and cold realities upon that facile optimism. He spoke of the abysmal ignorance and godlessness of the men and women

among whom he lived, and of the homes from which the children absorbed heathenism into their very souls. " Attach the children only to the Church," he said, " and you have effected nothing; for almost all of them will presently succumb to the alien influences that surround them. But convert the father and the mother, and you've gained the whole family."

This needed only to be stated forcibly to be abundantly clear and convincing. It is clear and convincing still. But the difficulties in the way of the conversion of the fathers and mothers are so great that the Church in England has in general kept to the complacent outlook of the dignitaries, pursued the welfare of the children, and despaired of their parents. And yet the futility of this policy was continually being demonstrated by the eventual lapsing of perhaps nine-tenths of those who as children had passed through the Church's hands. The young hopefuls of each generation were seen to become only the disappointed hopes of the next.

If the proportion of nine-tenths seems to anyone to be too high, let him consider how many of the young confirmees in any parish are found to be persevering after about twelve years, and further consider that the dwindling company of confirmees, so hopeful on their Confirmation day, were themselves the residuum of a much larger number of children who had already proved disappointing. For example, in the parish with which I am myself best acquainted, in the five years 1927-31 fifty-seven young persons were confirmed, after a searching selection each year of the few most hopeful out of the whole company of Sunday-school scholars of " Confirmation age ". Forty-nine of them belonged to heathen homes, in which there was not any adult person who practised the Christian religion. In 1940 a truthful report would state that ten remain as regular communicants, ten have moved away and been lost sight of, and thirty-seven have fallen away from Communion and do not now attend any Church service. (These figures are true of the period before the evacuations.) I would that the Bishops would ask for such a report from every parish, that the facts might be faced. I do not think that the proportions would vary very much.

The question is pertinent at this time, when in most parishes the work among children has suffered dislocation or collapse through the evacuations and general upset. What better occasion could there be for taking stock and con-

sidering our ways? Can we really find nothing better to do, in the reconstruction after this war, than to try to pick up the work once more on the old lines, which we have always felt to be unsatisfactory and known to be ineffective? Must we once more begin to try to fish with the net that is rent beyond repair?

My subject in this paper is to set down in writing what seems to me to have been contrary to Catholic principles, and therefore ineffective and unfruitful, in our methods of bringing up the children of the Church. My own experience has been chiefly of African mission-stations and a London working-class parish. I hope to provoke utterance from those of other experience.

I

The radical fault that vitiates the whole system has lain in the indiscriminate administration of Baptism to the infants of lapsed and non-practising parents. That this is a fault is beginning at long last to be acknowledged generally. It is recognized in the recent Report to Convocation. But many defenders of the old bad practice still remain obdurate. The subject was satisfactorily discussed in a recent number of THEOLOGY. There is also a pamphlet by five curates of Poplar Rural Deanery, published by S.P.C.K.,[1] which perhaps has not received as much attention as it deserves. It is especially significant as an expression of the growing uneasiness of our younger priests at what they feel to be the debasement of the sacrament of Baptism. These three papers are readily obtainable and are worthy of study. There is the less need to labour the point here.

It should be sufficient for us to realize that in our baptismal practice in England we have been doing what is *not* done in the mission-field: and not merely not done, but regarded as inadmissible and wrong in principle. The gainsayers may assert that the cases are not parallel, since England is not a heathen land; but that assertion is not likely to win conviction in the minds of any who know the true facts of English dechristianization.

Further, what we have been doing is contrary to the traditional practice of the universal Church. Apart from transient exceptions, the Church has not been accustomed to decide the question of admission to Baptism merely by saying, " We cannot let the innocent baby suffer ", or by

[1] " Theology " Occasional Papers: New Series, No. 1 (1s.).

quoting " Suffer the little children to come unto Me ". The procedure usually recognized as proper has been to administer Baptism to infants only when genuine guarantees of Christian upbringing have been furnished by the parents or other responsible and qualified persons capable of acting in their stead. In general practice this has meant either the rectification of such parents as were defaulters, and their reconciliation to the Church, prior to the Baptism of the children, or else the taking of the newly baptized out of the parents' care and control into some assured Christian environment.

Further, we have been doing what is not justified by the Church of England. The Prayer Book bears witness that the Church assumes, not the possibility but the certainty of the Christian upbringing of all infants who are to be baptized. And every youngest priest knows that even a reasonable probability of effective Christian upbringing can no longer be assumed in England without the surest guarantee.

But does not the sponsor system provide just this guarantee? The answer is a definite No, and for these reasons: (1) In very many cases it is practically impossible for sponsors to be provided. The non-practising parents rarely know anyone suitable. (2) Sponsors provided by the clergy can never know, when they consent to act, that they will be allowed by the parents subsequently to exercise their function. (3) If sponsors are put forward by the parents, it is not likely that they will be eligible, since none is eligible who has not been confirmed and is not a communicant. (4) Even if they are eligible, experience has shown that sponsors are usually powerless against the inertia and bad example (if not the hostile hindrance) of the parents. What *can* a sponsor do without the parents' active co-operation?

The instruction of the parents or the sponsors in the meaning of Baptism, as recommended in the Report, would of course be excellent and useful in any case where it would be accepted by them. Not very many cases, one fears; and not at all in cases where it is most needed. And there would be needed not one instruction only, but a long course of Christian teaching. Their willingness to listen to one instruction, or even to make suitable promises in accordance with it, would not furnish the requisite guarantee to justify Baptism. And even many instructions and many promises would not suffice, without a definite change in the practice of the parents, their own personal conversion and acceptance

of Christian teaching, and the consequent alteration in the atmosphere of their home.

As a guarantee of the Christian upbringing of the infants of non-practising parents the sponsor system is worn out and useless, and no patching of it can make it good.

By our custom of accepting for Baptism the infants from virtually non-Christian homes, whether with or without genuine god-parents, we have been in effect condoning, and therefore encouraging, the negligent attitude of the parents. We may be as earnest as possible in admonishing them of their neglect of duty, but our action in accepting the infant before they have shown their amendment stultifies our admonition. Actions speak louder than words. We have not the courage to say to them: " We must not baptize your child until you have put yourselves right with God; do this, for your child's sake as well as for your own ": which is one of the most effective levers for the awakening of parents to the seriousness of their state, as every missionary knows. And thereby we ourselves reduce the newly baptized infant's chance of Christian perseverance. Through our very zeal for the individual babies we have fallen into a practice which degrades the sacrament of Baptism, encourages the notion of it as a kind of white magic, and lowers the esteem of it in the minds of sensible people.

In the East End of London diocese there has been a perturbing declension in the number of baptisms year by year during the last half-century. In one parish, for example, it has fallen gradually from an average of 550 to some 35 a year. One would like to believe that this has been due to an increasing strictness in admittance to Baptism; but such does not seem to have been the case, although there has been an increasing reverence and dignity in the manner of its administration. One fears rather that it is a sign of the growing disrepute and disregard of Baptism in the minds of English people. And one may ask: Why should not the people think little of Baptism, when the Church herself, by her readiness to bestow it without any safeguards, appears to esteem it so cheaply?

II

Secondly, as regards the Church's education of the young Christians.

In a " well-worked " parish there are made many laudable

and temporarily effective attempts to keep in touch with the baptized children from infancy onwards. Our Sunday-schools and Catechisms, thanks to much excellent work applied to them by specialists, are not now usually such as to lead the children to associate religion with disorder and incompetence. But it is still the case that the Church teachers do perforce acquiesce in the function assigned to them in the parents' minds of being the Sunday afternoon nurse-maids, without realizing the subconscious effect of that upon the children's minds. What a long way we have travelled from the Prayer Book system of the catechizing of the children at evening prayer in the presence of their parents and guardians and employers !

Only a short time ago many of the non-practising parents used to compel or encourage their children to attendance at Sunday-school and even at Church services. (In East London this has become notably less common since the return from evacuation.) It was done with the purpose of " learning them to behave ", as part of the system of education of which the day-school formed the main feature; and it was therefore regarded as terminable at the same period in Sunday-school as in day-school. Since education stops at fourteen years, plainly religion, being part of education, will stop also.

The Church has by her practice assented to this view, and helped to fix it in their minds, with the almost inevitable result that the children learn it from them. The more diligent the curates have been in " looking-up absentees " and enlisting the mothers' support of their regular attendance, the more they have seemed forced to ignore or condone the parents' own malpractice; for if they stressed too strongly or too often the parents' duty towards God and rebuked their disregard of it, they found that the children were withdrawn by the parents from Church influence altogether. Therefore their zeal for the children helped to prepare the way for the time when the children, being now left by their parents to " please themselves whether they go or not ", and the priest to whose influence they responded having now probably moved away, naturally yield to the prevailing ethos of the home and follow their parents' example. Also in many cases the same parents who were most insistent upon their children's religious practice up to fourteen years become equally insistent on their dropping it then: they say, " You're not a kiddie any longer."

But up to fourteen " the children are so hopeful ", and the pathetic belief in their hopefulness still persists in spite of each year's list of new disappointments. We keep on, for the sake of the very few who will persevere; we keep on, consoling ourselves by saying, " We must leave the results in God's hands "; we keep on, shutting our eyes to the fact that the system is defeating its own ends and contributing to the making of its failures; we keep on, in those excellent reformed Sunday-schools of ours, teaching correct formulas of belief and conduct, which, however, the children in their home circumstances are unable to put into practice or to correlate with life; we keep on, although we cannot say to them, " Do what dad and mum do," and we dare not outrage them by saying, " Your dad and mum—yes, and all your uncles and aunties—have disobeyed God and turned away from Him."

With the Sunday-schools and Catechisms we may include the Scouts and Guides, the Brigades, Youth Clubs and Guilds of various kinds, all of which have the same purpose of maintaining the adherence of the children to the Church, and all gain the same result of establishing in the sacramental life only a meagre few out of the many who have passed through them. In these organizations also the same radical faults are inherent—that the children are shepherded apart from their parents, and that the system is itself stultifying the care expended, as it does not attack the problem of de-christianization at the vital point, the home.

Has not experience now sufficiently proved that the great majority of those picked boys who have been enrolled as Scouts, even in " closed " troops, do not eventually persevere as true and permanent Church members, but drop out of their Church life almost as a matter of course whenever the scouting, of which their Church-going was a part, ceases to interest and amuse them? Indeed, is it not true that a Scout troop, far from being an essential auxiliary in a parish, may easily become a rival organization to the Church, supplying (like Freemasonry for men) by its comradeship, sociality, mutual service, together with some ritual and " mystery ", a quasi-religious substitute for Christianity?

" But," someone will say, " cannot the parents be reached by a zealous and tactful priest *through* their children? Will not the interest taken in the kiddies' welfare win the parents' hearts, and the children's example remind the parents of their own forgotten duties, and so lead to their conversion?"

Certainly, if this be so in a good number of cases, then the system which is here criticized may claim to stand thereby justified, and the criticism must fall to the ground. Experience alone can provide the answer. May I put the question to each one who reads this paper? For myself I can only say that, so far as my personal experience and my enquiries into that of others have informed me, it would appear that the conversion of lapsed parents by means of caring for their children is so rare as to be insignificant. One would be glad indeed to be assured to the contrary; but if such conversions have been numerous, one must ask: " Where, then, are those numerous converted parents and their numerous offspring? Why are they not now filling our churches?"

III

Finally, in regard to Confirmation and admission to Communion, it is important to observe that the Prayer Book declares the proper season to be determined, not by years of age, but by " years of discretion ". The Bishops surely have not been without reason in doubting the discretion of some of the young children whom priests insisted upon presenting for Confirmation. But the Bishops obscured this point by laying down a rough-and-ready rule of a certain age-limit. Discretion depends much more upon circumstance than upon age. Indeed, it may be gravely questioned whether any child can be considered to have discretion (in this sense) who is living in a Christless home. Can the Church regard seriously a child's ratification of baptismal vows while he or she is under the dominion of parents who in practice repudiate those vows? Can the children have the discretion to know that the vows they ratify are vows to act not only for God, but also contrary to their parents, and that in a real sense their parents are part of that " world " which they must renounce in order to believe the Christian faith and keep all God's commandments? Is it fair, is it sensible, to put a child into such a position?

Young confirmands are usually pressed forward by the stronger will of their priest. His is the zeal; and often his, not theirs, the repentance, faith and obedience. If the children are well in hand, they are easily excited to a superficial piety. Team spirit also bears its part: " I want to be done along with Bill." Indeed, it is not unknown for children to be dragooned *en bloc* for Confirmation,

although in such a matter regimentation even of the gentlest kind can never be right; the wind bloweth where it listeth, and no one can organize the Holy Ghost.

The children are usually " prepared " in large classes, so that the priest, even if he have a " private interview " with each hapless and self-conscious child, really has little chance of gaining a genuine knowledge as to the inner preparedness of his candidates. And—the acme of absurdity—the assent of the lapsed parents is solicited. And so the number is made up which the Bishop expects to be produced.

But in the Prayer Book the genuine conversion of each individual confirmand is presumed, meaning by conversion a settled conviction of belief and deliberate intelligent determination of life. Is not the rite of Confirmation misused and depraved if the priest presents candidates of whose perseverance he can only say, as one priest did say, " There is only a fifty-fifty chance " ? Much more so, when the chance is not ten-fifty ? I do not, of course, mean that any priest can guarantee the indefectibility of any confirmand; but I do maintain that it is wrong—dishonouring to God, deceptive to the Bishop, disloyal to the Church, and unfair to the candidate—to present confirmands of whom there is in actual fact only the scantiest personal knowledge and a vague hope that somehow or other it will turn out to be well with the child. So tenuous is this hope that one hears priests trying to comfort their doubtful minds and consciences by saying, " Oh well, we must trust to the strengthening grace of the sacrament." They know rightly that the ratification of the vows is not of the essence of Confirmation, and that Confirmation is the sacrament by which strengthening grace is given; but they ought also to know, by their past experience, that the gift given in Confirmation is *not* a grace of perseverance.

The Bishops know this, and they try to give to the administration of the rite such an adventitious impressiveness as may affect the emotions of the candidates, and at the last moment fix their minds and wills to conversion. And thus the Confirmation service becomes very different from the " use of the said book and none other ", and the Bishops give a notable example of lawless alteration of the spirit of the Prayer Book. For, very plainly, the Prayer Book rite is devoid of emotionalism, and assumes that the candidates are presented because they are suitably impressed and determined already.

In the case of the candidate from Christian homes the atmosphere is favourable, and intimate influence assured, and therefore Confirmation may be, and should be, given quite early, according to general Christian custom. But, except in that case, there are strong arguments for delaying Confirmation and Communion until the perturbations of puberty have been passed, and the young person has left the pupilage of school, and has been granted some degree of independence in the home, and has sufficient knowledge and freedom to shape his own course—that is to say, seventeen or eighteen years of age at the earliest.

1. For otherwise the lonely child is put by early Confirmation into too difficult and invidious a position as the sole representative and champion of the Christian religion in the home.

2. " It is good," some say, " that the young warrior should be armed to the full before he is confronted with the serious temptations and conflicts of life." This is true; but the giving of a knight's panoply *ex opere operato* in Confirmation does not necessarily make a gallant and effective knight. It is more probable that he will not know how to use his harness in which he has been endued too early, and will cast it from him as a distasteful burden too heavy to be endured.

3. And one fears that, when the almost inevitable lapse has happened, the confirmee, now become adolescent, will look back upon the sacraments which he received as having been " kids' games ".

4. And is it true, as is sometimes said, that if the sinner desires to return later on, he will find his return the easier because " he knows the road " ? Is it not, in fact, more usual for him to have altogether forgotten the road which he learnt while he was too young to heed ?

5. It is surely less harmful to lapse from mere Church attendance and Bible-class than from the full experience of the sacramental life. In the former case he goes out, knowing that he has not had all that the Christian religion has to offer him; and his return is easy, for all he needs to do is to resume his Church-going, and he is likely then to be willing and able to profit by a solid preparation for the sacraments. In the latter case he goes out knowing that he has had all, and turning his back upon that all. The temptation awaits him, whenever he thinks of returning: " I tried all that out, and it meant nothing to me." Also

the road of return is made formidable, because for him nothing else can avail than the hard way of humiliation and penitence. The prodigal son may know his road home, but it cannot be an easy one for him to tread.

6. Finally, the scriptural warnings are sufficiently applicable to point us back to a resumption of that caution and reserve which used to characterize Christian education. " It were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, when they have known it, to turn back from the holy commandments delivered unto them " (2 Pet. ii, 21; *cf.* Heb. vi, 4 *ff.*; x, 26 *ff.*, etc.).

G. D. Carleton.

SHORT NOTICES

The broadcast addresses of W. H. Elliott are so well known that a mention is sufficient (*Be of Good Cheer*, Mowbrays, 2s. 6d.); Longmans publish a chapter from an early book of his at 6d., under the title *Do We Really Die ?*

Other war literature is represented by the Bishop of Oxford's *A Menace to Faith* (6d.), the Encænian Sermon preached at Oxford on June 16; *A Second Day of God*, by Bishop Winnington-Ingram (Longmans, 1s.), four war sermons; and *Facing the Facts*, by F. B. Flint (C.L.A., 6d.), a course of instruction given to soldiers.

Other publications are, *How I Came to Acknowledge the Pope*, by T. J. Hardy (Burns Oates, 1s.), which the author himself suggests is naïve; and *Happiness in Marriage*, by a priest and a doctor (Sands, 2s. 6d.). The latter is doubtless admirably suited to its own public; but Anglicans would prefer that, if two writers are needed for a book almost entirely meant for women, one should be a woman.

W. K. L. C.

MISCELLANEA

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NOTES

We propose during this year to publish a series of reviews of important theological books that have been published during the last hundred years. The series will not be chronological. Each reviewer will handle his book in his own way, but we have asked for an estimate of the book's importance at the time of its publication and of its importance now. It is likely that a decreasing number of substantial theological books will be published in the near future; and in any case we believe that readers of Theology will be glad to have their attention called or recalled to some older books.

REVISED REVIEWS—I

The Foundations of Belief: Being Notes Introductory to the Study of Theology. By A. J. Balfour. London, 1895.

Published in January, 1895, this book reached its fifth edition in August of that same year, and its eighth in November, 1901. The daily and the weekly press were full of it, and the *Church Quarterly Review* speaks of the " rapturous reception " which was accorded it. From the side of theology the criticisms were very diverse. The *Expository Times* describes the argument as " liable to be used for destructive purposes ", and says that the effect of the book " is to leave us face to face with non-rational beliefs, a position as sad as possible for a rational creature to occupy ". To that reviewer Mr Balfour " destroyed the foundation of any theistic argument ". But the writer in the *Church Quarterly* tells us how it was " praised as a defence of the faith from orthodox pulpits and by popular divines ", how artisans came five hundred at a time on Sundays for weeks to study it, how its " destructive criticism . . . with a completeness not hitherto equalled has annihilated Naturalism ", and how the author has done " a great service to the Church of Christ ".

From the side of philosophy one comment from the *International Journal of Ethics* will suffice. The book is described as " one of those attempts to burn the ships and force a desperate venture, which more than anything else have been in this century the popular propaganda of infidelity. Those who attempt to discredit reason convict themselves more and more clearly of not knowing what reason means." It comes as no surprise, therefore, to find M. Nédoncelle remarking that " Lord Balfour est souvent regardé comme le successeur de Mansel ".

It was not until after I was asked to write this notice that I read the book; and probably there will be some who read this who are as ignorant as I was of its contents, which I shall therefore summarize.

In the preface Mr Balfour says that his purpose is to " delineate and, if possible, to recommend a certain attitude of mind ", and " to lead the reader up to a point of view whence the small fragments of the Infinite Whole, of which we are able to obtain a glimpse, may appear to us in their true relative proportions ".

In the first part of the book Mr Balfour surveys naturalism, and considers the consequences of a naturalistic theory of the universe on ethics, æsthetics and reason. Such an attack would, I imagine, have excited more interest in 1895 than it does now: but there are many passages in these pages which stand out for their felicity of expression.

Parts II and III discuss " Some Reasons for Belief " and " Some Causes of Belief ". Balfour's enquiry into the practical consequences of the naturalistic theory has shown them to be " wellnigh intolerable ". He now passes on to consider the character of the knowledge which is thought to be obtained within the limits of the naturalistic system. " Nothing stands more in need of demonstration than the obvious ", and Balfour invites his readers to consider why we hold to be true the beliefs which science inculcates. This examination is important, for no one " would pay the slightest attention to naturalism if it did not force itself into the retinue of science ".

Then follows a chapter, rather surprisingly printed in smaller type, and headed " Idealism; after some recent English writings ". T. H. Green was the writer, and contemporary notices complain that Balfour has misunderstood him. The argument is directed to showing that in idealism there is no escape from the difficulties in theology, ethics and science which empiricism leaves on our hands.

Large type and the main line of argument are then resumed, and in a discussion of Philosophy and Rationalism the omnipresence of " conviction apart from or in excess of proof " is asserted and the reckless use of the Canon of Consistency is assailed. And in the third part Balfour argues that if actual origin and not proof is considered, other factors, which he sums up in the word " Authority ", are of first importance. It is of

this part that one reviewer said Mr Balfour had exposed himself " to his own criticism and ridicule in the earlier chapters of the book ". Such comment rests, I think, on confusion caused by Balfour's use of the word " authority ", which is not always easy to follow.

In the final part of the book Balfour makes some " Suggestions towards a Provisional Philosophy ". It has been said that this constructive part is of " least permanent importance ", but there is plenty here which is worth reading. For the unification of belief we must " decline to draw any distinction between different classes of belief where no relevant distinction can as a matter of fact be discovered ". Discussion of this " elementary principle " leads on to an argument from " needs " to their satisfaction, stated in a way which emphasizes the transcendental character of our notions of " highest " and " best ", and which I think escapes any charge of pragmatism. Then, after two chapters on Beliefs and Formulas (where some valuable distinctions are drawn) and one on Science and Theology (where there is a discussion of miracles), the book ends with some " suggestions towards a provisional unification ". If science requires the postulate of a rational God, so does ethics a moral God. And the same is true of æsthetics. And, finally, arguments are adduced to show that Christian theism is more probable than any other " provisional unification " because of " the degree to which it ministers to our ethical needs ".

I should judge that the attention paid to the book forty-five years ago was largely due to the public eminence of its author. It has undoubted grace of style and frequent felicity of illustration. Some probably welcomed it for its really telling criticism of naturalism: others may have welcomed it because they thought it justified them in believing anything they liked. Most of its opponents stormed at it because it seemed to disparage reason. I do not think this was Balfour's intention: for the purpose of the Essay (which is a better description of the book than the word " Notes " in its subtitle) is to show that we should be " left sensibly poorer by the deposition of Reason from its ancient position as the Ground of all existence ", and at the same time to elaborate the truth expressed by Lotze in the sentence " Reality is richer than thought". Balfour's terminology is here sometimes undoubtedly misleading (see, *e.g.*, Pringle Pattison, *The Idea of God*, pp. 62 *f.*), but I do not think that he is any more open to a fair charge of irrationalism than is either Tennant or Oman in their different ways of emphasizing the importance of the reasonable as distinct from the rational, and of our highest awareness. And although since Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, which closely followed Balfour's book, the so-called conflict between science and religion has no longer had a chance of seriously holding the field of philosophical attention, there is much in *The Foundations of Belief* which still makes it valuable

reading to-day, when we are engaged in a catastrophic fulfilment of Balfour's expectation that " the inner discord which exists, and which must gradually declare itself, between the emotions proper to naturalism and those which have actually grown up under the shadow of traditional conviction, will at no distant date most unpleasantly translate itself into practice ".

H. C. L. Heywood.

COMMENT ON LITERARY PERIODICALS

Much confusion in discussions of current educational and cultural problems arises from the application to changed conditions of anachronistic class measurements. This consideration detracts slightly from a spirited attack by Fr Widdrington in the September *Christendom*[1] on the younger school of Catholic Sociologists, who, he complains, now seek cures in London, or bury themselves in university academicism. " Forty years ago we took it as a matter of course that the call was either to the North or to the Midlands. London was not for us." The criticism may be largely true, though the present commentator, who might be numbered among the generation in the dock, writes from the Industrial North: but it could be argued that the situation is more fluid now than forty years ago; that organized " Labour ", the T.U.C., etc., no longer represent the " worker "; and that at least the younger *Christendom* writers are beginning to discover the importance of rural areas ignored forty years ago, and are concerned also to attack sociological problems at the educational nerve centre—an attack bound to appear academic at first sight.

The " Left " press are slow to acknowledge the same characteristics of the contemporary class structure. Therefore it is encouraging to find the editor of *Horizon*[2] (September) rejecting *simpliste* Socialist talk about the necessity for " the workers " themselves to win this war if it is to be a real " anti-Fascist " war. Mr Connolly replies that " to increase the power of the workers at the expense of the middle classes who officer them would be fatal ". (After this venture into the topical political arena *Horizon* returns in October to its proper field with interesting reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence, and a fascinating account of Hieronymus Bosch's three paintings of the " Temptations of St Anthony ", in which the artist progressively moves from the immediate and openly sensual to the psychological and symbolical level.)

Horizon's discussion of class and war arises out of a controversy with the American *Partisan Review*,[3] where (September-October) Mr Dwight Macdonald attacks Mr Stephen Spender's defence of

[1] Pub. B. Blackwell, Oxford, 2s. quarterly.

[2] 6, Selwyn House, Lansdowne Terrace, W.C. 1; 1s. monthly.

[3] 117, East 10th Street, New York; bi-monthly, 25 cents.

the war, and claims that a consistent believer in a working-class Socialist revolution cannot support a National Government; Spender replies in an able letter which is effectively countered again by Mr Macdonald. This number also contains characteristic obituaries of Trotsky, but most interesting is its review of Mr Eliot's *Idea of a Christian Society*. The reviewer, Mr Lionel Trilling (author of a scholarly book on M. Arnold), although he thinks the Church a " maleficent " instrument in society, yet admits that there are in Mr Eliot's view " elements that are wanting " in the scientific determinist view, and makes the interesting comment that " perhaps in recent times intelligent men of religion have been more honest in admitting the necessary assumptive elements in thought than have the radical philosphers with their tendency to hold assumption illegitimate ". Related to this part played by " assumption " is a recent centenary discussion of Thomas Hardy in *Southern Review*, Summer, 1940,[1] where it is argued (in good articles by Messrs Allen Tate and Donald Davidson) that the worst effects of Hardy's scientific meliorist philosophy were offset by his instinctive expression of native realism, his representation of a folk tradition: that the " unbelief " which he claimed and obtruded was always itself dependent on " belief ". Not that Hardy was fully aware of the conflicts within the society and tradition he mirrored: for that we have to turn to the deeper religious sensibilities of a Dostoievsky, or of a Manzoni, whose *Promessi Sposi* is the subject of a good article in the September *Scrutiny*[2] by D. Traversi, who shows how Manzoni is " concerned with the threat of anarchy . . . (and) the relationship between an objective faith and a world threatened by the consequences of irresponsibility leading to meaningless determinism ". The threat of anarchy—social and spiritual anarchy —is the concern of *Townsman* (November),[3] where, in an interesting and varied number, Bro. George Every, S.S.M., pleads for political contraction to a limited area where responsible government and loyalty can be recovered; and Mr Ronald Duncan, besides an excellent reinstating of the poet Rochester (who wrote songs in the orderly Restoration period), calls on the Church to impose a discipline on society; if she doesn't, " some other authority will have to attempt it, and . . . will probably have little patience with those who failed to solve these problems ".

Purpose (December, 1940),[4] just arrived, contains its own obituary. It has devoted eleven years to human and humane interests in art, finance, mental and bodily health, philosophy and nutrition. This number is a worthy finale, containing an

[1] Louisiana State University, 75 cents (quarterly).
[2] Deighton Bell, Cambridge, 2s. 6d. (quarterly).
[3] West Mill, Morwenstow, North Cornwall, 2s. (quarterly).
[4] The C. W. Daniel Co., Ltd., 46, Bernard Street, W.C. 1. (2s.).

important lecture on W. B. Yeats by Mr T. S. Eliot, an autobiographical account of Mr W. H. Auden's debt to Hardy, a useful article on food distribution, and the usual excellent reviews. We bid *Purpose* farewell with regret.

W. R. Jarrett-Kerr.

DECLARATION

This faith be mine: though Time and Space should fail,
To know th' Eternal Spirit doth abide
Uniting all that Fair and Noble is
In one vast tabernacle of the Truth:
Wherein ourselves, our very souls and all
That makes us individual are conserved
In value undiminished and unstained:
Incorporate, incorporeal, intertwined:
With all that was, and is and e'er shall be—
Imperishable glories of man's soul !
Nay, more: for values in that hierarchy
In morning prime endure, and shall wax great
In splendour of divine communion:
For as the branchless vine must fruitless lie,
The living God must in His children find
The ground of increase and His field for work
That cannot senseless repetition be—
Mechanic standardizing of some plan—
But new enrichment of the store of worth
Through His fecund Intelligence in each
Of us, slips o' the fruitful Vine etern:
O glorious consummation of our life,
To feed the Ever-feeding, give to Him
Increase of sustenance that first was His,
And swell the boundless bliss of Deity !

Albert A. Cock.

CORRESPONDENCE

MR LEWIS'S PEACE PROPOSALS

To the Editor of Theology.

Dear Sir,

I should like to thank Mr C. S. Lewis for his courteously-worded olive branch. I believe that I can accept nearly all his points. With much of what he says I cordially agree, and while there are some things which I should put very differently, I do not think that our differences would often amount to contradiction. The difficulty really lies in the borderland between what is and is not sin, where he would draw a much sharper frontier

than I should. I think this desire for a sharp frontier between what is and what is not ethical has come to him directly or indirectly from Kant. Now I do not share Mr Mackinnon's view, recently expressed in these pages, that Kant is the origin of modern evil, but I do not feel in any way bound to follow him in distinctions between reason, conscience and taste which are not in the *philosophia perennis* or in Confucius. It seems to me impossible to criticize an author for carelessness, or incoherence, or a failure in consideration for some important aspect of personal relations, without bringing a certain moral implication into our criticism. We certainly ought to be afraid of our arrogance in so doing. But then we may well tremble at our arrogance in making greater or lesser accusations. The critic is in danger of " going off the handle " at a book whose manner rubs him up the wrong way. But he can do this without making any criticism which is not about the texture of the style. Bitterness seems to me to be a matter of tone. In the hostile review which lies most heavily on my own conscience I said nothing, subtle or crude, about the morality of the book. I do not think that objectivity in reviewing is at all easy; Mr Lewis has pointed out some of the many difficulties. What I doubt is whether the situation can be improved by a deliberate flight from the treacherous borderland between criticisms which have no moral implication whatsoever and plain denunciations of mortal sin. I cannot help suspecting that if we did so the last would become more common and more crude, arrogant, and unsympathetic, while literary criticism proper would have to be confined to formal blemishes. Mr Lewis clearly admits the authority of the critic to analyse the moral outlook of a book. I find it very hard to see how he is to do so in words which bear no moral implication. But I believe he could so analyse even a book with whose outlook he thoroughly disagreed without in any way losing his patience and good humour.

Yours sincerely,

George Every, S.S.M.

To the Editor of Theology.

Dear Sir,

In approaching the subject of Mr Lewis's " Peace Proposals " I must begin with an apology to Mr Lewis. He has now convinced me by private correspondence that I was wrong in stating that his first position " logically implied " a Calvinistic theology. My logic—never, I fear, a strong point—was at fault. I should have said merely that his attitude to secular culture seemed to me the attitude which a Calvinist would probably take up—a very different matter. I never, of course, suspected Mr Lewis of consciously Calvinistic tendencies; and it is abundantly clear from his revised position in the " Peace Proposals " that my first suspicion was quite unfounded.

I am glad that Mr Lewis is able to go so far with Brother Every and myself. I have felt all along that we were mutually befogged by words; that Mr Lewis could not fail to perceive moral implications in literary style; and that he could not seriously believe us to be attempting to propagate an exclusive literary gnosis within the Church. We are now agreed on fundamentals, as churchmen should be. I should like, nevertheless, to comment individually on Mr Lewis's proposals, as I feel there are some points which still call for discussion.

1. " Is it the function of the ' trained critic ' to discover the latent beliefs and standards in a book, or to pass judgment on them when discovered, or both ?" This question has always worried me. The processes of disengaging the " values " in a poem and of passing judgment upon them are certainly distinct. I insisted strongly on this point in *The Criterion* as long ago as 1935. But I increasingly doubt whether the former process may be performed at all adequately without the sort of equipment necessary for the latter—certainly in an ordinary review or in conversation it is virtually impossible to keep the strands apart. For example, a materialist, with whatever critical training, will tend simply *not to notice* the subtler implications of a Christian writer. (I don't think the reverse is true; materialism is a false *simplification* of the universe, and so is comprehensible by the Christian, who is used to a more complex attitude.) Similarly a depraved mind, however trained, will not notice " moral refinements ", nor a boor perceive the subtle distinctions of social " tone ". What we perceive is largely governed by our interests, and our interests derive from what we already know. Doesn't Mr Lewis draw his line in the wrong place ? A critic must have in him something of the φρόνιμος; he must have the quality of spiritual discernment. But surely the point is that the φρόνιμος himself is not necessarily a good man: he may not follow the good that he perceives. Wisdom is necessary to criticism, but the wise man may himself be a " castaway ". Draw the line here, then, between wisdom (even including moral wisdom) and sanctity, not between the critic and the φρόνιμος.

2. Mr Lewis would have us distinguish between bad morals and bad philosophy on the one hand, and what is merely bad taste on the other. But bad taste, though not necessarily *sinful*, is necessarily *evil*. Bad taste proceeds from an unhealthy environment, an environment of evil, due originally to individual acts of sin, but whose unconscious influence is not sinful (since it does not involve voluntary acceptance), but is nevertheless evil. Mr Lewis has already agreed that a writer's unconscious beliefs may be revealed in the quality of his style; but he does not seem to realize that they may be revealed in the very qualities which he cites here as subject only to the judgment of " taste "—qualities such as facility, pomposity, etc. And I should naturally deny the parallel between literary taste and a taste for prunes:

literary taste is concerned for "values" and is not merely subjective. In this section we seem to be back again where we began, only with our main disagreement cleared of verbal ambiguities and false theological implications.

3. I heartily agree that there are serious dangers in over subtlety, and indeed concur in all that Mr Lewis says under this head.

4. Yes, the ignorant have their own protection, though there are dangers enough to keep the critic employed. But his main duty is not to warn people off dangerous books, but to point beyond the books to the social evils they imply.

5. Of course I agree that we must read mainly "for fun". And by the critic's "working hours" I certainly mean his hours of criticism, not his hours of reading. Indeed, I have often been blamed for advocating a literature of "escape"—if it be escape into a genuinely pleasanter and better environment than that of everyday existence, and not merely the presentation of everyday life with a factitious gloss upon it.

Lastly, a bad English style may, as Mr Lewis says, "result from poverty or other misfortune", but only if the social environment is bad. Old ballads and chap-book stories suggest that a good English style was once a much commoner possession than it is to-day. Brother Every and I are concerned to emphasize this aspect of the situation, and to examine contemporary society in its literary products. For a sound state of society is the essential basis of sound literary and artistic production.

Yours sincerely,

S. L. Bethell.

Cathays Park,
Cardiff.

THE MODERN CHURCHMEN'S UNION

To the Editor of Theology.

Dear Sir,

While thanking you for your kind comments on the Report on "The Principles of Christian Social Ethics" in the October issue of *The Way*, I feel bound to question the entire accuracy of some of your observations. Firstly, *The Way* is the organ, not merely of "a number of younger members" of the Modern Churchmen's Union, but of its Council, which, although it gives me a latitude for which I am duly grateful, nevertheless controls it more closely than most other publications with which its members are concerned. Its policy in publishing *The Way* is most authoritatively expressed in the following extract from an official statement, made about a year ago:

"The Modern Churchmen's Union stands for the freedom of religious discussion and thought, and endeavours to promote a reasoning and enquiring type of Christianity, in keeping with

modern thought, and yet, of course, different from purely secular 'Modernism'.

"The publication in January, 1938, of the Report of the Anglican Commission on Christian Doctrine testifies to the success of our efforts—so much so that some people have even declared that the M.C.U. is no longer necessary; but obscurantism is again rearing its head in some quarters, and would undoubtedly become yet more militant were it not for the continued existence of our Union, whose influence extends, of course, far beyond its membership of some 1,200.

"At the same time the Modernism of 1898, when the M.C.U. was founded, is in many respects not the Modernism of to-day. That is partly why one is sometimes told that Anglican Modernism is out of date; but critics who speak thus are, of course, really accepting our own principle that the revelation of God will be different in some respects for each generation. Nowadays, the most important issues lie even more in the sphere of Christian life and work, of social and personal ethics, than in questions of doctrine and biblical criticism, important as those are. That is why the M.C.U. Council has recently appointed a Sociological Committee, and set up various commissions to study such questions as the principles of Christian Social Ethics, Christian Education, Religion and Psychology, Christianity and Industry (Rural and Urban), International Relations, etc. It is with these problems that *The Way* will largely, but not exclusively, concern itself, especially during the war."

In view of this, although there are, of course, inevitable differences of opinion inside an organization which in large measure fosters freedom of thought, it seems to me that the criticisms of the M.C.U. in your first paragraph are somewhat misplaced. I am the more pleased that you can nevertheless welcome the tone of this Report on Christian Social Ethics, and can assure you that its writers are under no illusions as to the "immensity of the task to which they have set their hand" and the need for widespread and close co-operation with other Christians. It is in the hope that others may find it of some use as an interim statement of what you describe as "the proper steps preliminary to a Christian advance in the sociological field", which "have been so long neglected" by nearly all sections of the Church, that we propose to reissue it shortly in a revised and cheaper form as a pamphlet; but I fear there will still be no room in its very limited space for a more "adequate reference to the place of the family, nor to agriculture". We are well aware of their importance, but also of our incapacity to surmount the problems which they entail.

Yours, etc.,
H. P. KINGDON
(*Editor of* "*The Way*").

EXETER COLLEGE,
OXFORD,
December 7, 1940.

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

DEAR SIR,

In the December issue of THEOLOGY, p. 322, you criticize the older members of the Modern Churchmen's Union for "their tiresome absorption in questions which have lost much of their relevance". As a sympathetic reader of your paper I should be extremely grateful to you if you will state explicitly what these "questions" are. The honest criticism of a friend is always worthy of attention, and the smitings of the righteous are valued by those who realize that perfection is only attained by a process of continual reformation.

H. D. A. MAJOR.

RIPON HALL,
OXFORD,
December 21, 1940.

[We are glad to learn from Mr Kingdon that the large concern of *The Way* with Christian Social Ethics, etc., is in accordance with the defined policy of the Council of the M.C.U., but he seems to allow that the determination of this policy by a body, which has as its special province a concern with modern problems, was a little overdue. In reply to Dr Major, it may suffice to call his attention to the comment of the Editor of *The Modern Churchman* on a letter published in the November, 1940, number of that journal, pp. 333 *ff*. The letter is a plea for the evolution of "a completely modern Prayer Book". The Editor remarks, we think justly, that "for nearly thirty years past" he has been trying to induce the Church Authorities to respond to this plea, and he alludes to the "difficult task of expressing accurately modern religious ideals and spiritual and temporal needs in truthful and inspiring devotional language", as though that ought to be the aim of Prayer Book revisers.—ED. THEOLOGY.]

BOOK REVIEWS

CHRISTIAN PACIFISM RE-EXAMINED. By C. J. Cadoux. Blackwell. 12s. 6d.

I[1]

This is a book which demanded a great deal of courage to write and publish at the present moment. The Pacifist case is under a cloud and the atmosphere is befogged by the number of ex-Pacifists who are engaged in retreating from their former position. Dr Cadoux quotes Lord Caldecote as saying that the invasion of Denmark formed the acid test of pacifism and as relying upon this event in order to discredit the Pacifist argument. Apparently, Mr C. E. M. Joad, Mr Bertrand Russell, and Mr A. A. Milne agree with the Lord Chief Justice. Captain Mumford, having written and spoken for the Peace Pledge Union, has now rejoined the army. Yet Dr Cadoux remains unshaken. This fact seems to prove one point at least. He has formed his conclusions upon a religious conviction that cannot be affected by the turn of events. The gentlemen who are in retreat were all the exponents of a mere political pacifism. As Pacifists are in the minority, they cannot expect that their policy should become immediate practical politics. The only pacifism which can stand up to the drenching storms of Hitler's aggression and win through is based upon the deepest moral and religious foundations. In the future, Pacifists would do well to consider this point and to avoid the too easy confusion of pacifism and politics, of spiritual right and political left.

The work of Dr Cadoux is, in reality, a valuable treatise upon Christian morals of the highest practical and contemporary importance. He argues his case from a detailed survey of the world situation, both in the present and in the immediate past. The history of the causes of the present war compel him to remain a convinced Pacifist. He is ready to concede that there are other attitudes possible, but, in the last resort, he equates pacifism with Christian discipleship. In some respects Dr Cadoux's attitude reminds us strongly of " the two ways " of the *Didache*. He is convinced that the non-Pacifist way is the way of death and he is anxious to repudiate it.

It is really impossible to reach a decisive verdict in such a case. Dr Cadoux is convinced that Christian pacifism is the only

[1] Our publication of two reviews of one controversial book is not due to that desire for a safe place on the fence which must be peculiarly congenial to an Anglican editor. The fact is that, when one review was ready, another, which had been written for but refused by one of our contemporaries, also came into our hands. The divergence between them seemed remarkable enough to justify the publication of both.—ED. THEOLOGY.

desirable way. He is able to cite recent events as justifying his position. As he showed in a learned earlier work, he has a great deal of Patristic evidence on his side. But, in the last resort, his position is decided by conscientious conviction. It is not open to argue such a matter, but it must be realized that there may be equally strong conviction on the other side and it may be equally sincere. It is not an obvious truism that Christianity may be linked with pacifism as an assumption. Just as is the case with gambling or teetotalism, it is a matter in which good men differ notoriously. In order to preserve the wide moral catholicity which Christianity has reached upon these disputed points, the same Church must be ready to contain both Pacifists and non-Pacifists. At the same time, it must be prepared to respect minority convictions which are undoubtedly sincere. Nobody seeking the path of Christian discipleship, whatever may be their personal moral convictions with regard to war, could have anything to do with the detestable treatment which is only too often the lot of the conscientious objector.

The enquiry of Dr Cadoux is of the greatest importance as a defence of the Pacifist position. It should be of use to the Pacifist and to the non-Pacifist alike. His survey of history will be challenged by those who accept the conclusions of, for example, Mr Ramsay Muir. Yet, as a general outline, it is not possible to find fault with his historical details, whatever may be thought of the assumptions which Dr Cadoux erects upon them. His book certainly deserves the attention of all who are enquiring into the relationship of war to Christian ethics.

The book provides a sharp reminder that the Christian is precluded from the use of such weapons as lying propaganda, even if he is not a Pacifist. Such a study as Lord Ponsonby's *Falsehood in War-Time* is a terrible record of such war strategy reduced to its lowest terms. The incident of the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* during the last war affords a good example. It was used to discredit the enemy Government. Nobody stopped to ask whether it was not committing a logical fallacy to argue from the particular to the general and to blame the whole German people for the act of one U-boat commander in sinking a defenceless ship. Long after, the present Prime Minister cynically admitted that the ship was carrying munitions. It need only be remarked that modern warfare is steeped in such methods, and that they are quite alien to the moral professions of the Christian Church.

Again, whatever may be thought of Dr Cadoux's attitude, his historical survey forces the conclusion that the present war is the judgment which follows the moral apostasy of the nations. It is not a case of right against wrong or, as Lord Halifax has so tritely assumed, of Christianity against paganism. It is a tragedy brought to pass by the service of lower ends, and has smitten every people as a consequence of wrongdoing. It calls to

penitence and not to boastful assumptions that one's own cause is right and that everybody else is wrong, a habit which Hitler shares with certain other Governments. Dr Cadoux should be read from this standpoint. His history has then much to teach those who are seeking the Christian way.

But there is one case which needs to be considered. A Government undertakes far-reaching social reforms and achieves a vast measure of success. In so doing it cuts across the vested interests of other countries, and they seek to impose reaction upon it and to destroy its reforms. What must be the attitude to be advocated by the Christian? No question arises of semi-political objections to "imperialist war", such as Mr Maxton brings against the present conflict. May it not be condoning evil to refuse to fight against the aggressor? This actual instance is drawn from the incidents of 1919 and 1920, when this country, through Sir Edward Ironside, sought to upset the Russian Revolution. It again took concrete form in 1936, when Franco attacked the constitutional democratic Government of Spain. It is difficult not to follow those Christians who accepted the standpoint of the Dean of Canterbury and urged armed resistance. But it is also a question which goes to prove that, however firm may be the religious foundations, it is not possible to separate Pacifist arguments and political theory. In one detail we are bound to agree with Dr Cadoux. Subsequent invasions by Hitler do not justify an abandonment of pacifism. Indeed, it may be contended that they were rendered certain through the declaration of war by England and France. In any case, the principle is exactly the same after the event as before it took place.

We have said enough to indicate a few of the problems raised for us by a reading of Dr Cadoux. It only remains to compliment him on the high tone and quality of his work, and to trust that all who read it will be as stimulated as was one reader. It should be provocative of thought even where it does not command agreement. It indicates that no view of Christian morality is complete which ignores the Pacifist case. For this reason we would suggest that, together with a book on the other side, it should be used as one of the textbooks for the Christian Morals paper in the General Ordination Examination. So much clercial opinion on war is either a mere following of the majority verdict or sentimental pietism that a close study of such a book as this should do much to clarify it and to promote Christian leadership in national affairs.

F. H. Amphlett Micklewright.

II

Of all the books on pacifism that I have read, this is the most sterile, artificial and freezingly abstract. From the first page to the last there is hardly a hint of the urgent agony and the

lacerating moral tensions of our time. The author gives the impression that he is dwelling in a remote and lofty ivory tower, with sound-proof walls, to which not an echo even of our tragedy penetrates. With his system of precious principles, he has a polished solution for almost every problem. Here and there he leaves a ragged edge. But not much, or often. On the whole, he gets his wild beasts safely behind the iron bars of his cold logic, with not a growl left in them.

It is this which vitiates the book. Even though his arguments were a thousand times right—and they are very far from being so—still one would feel his conclusion could not but be wrong. There is no blood in its veins, only black ink and logic. Cadoux is the perfect legalist. At the top of the page there is the model sentence (Sermon on the Mount). He strives to copy meticulously and neatly—oh, so neatly! He is very scrupulous, very exact, and very just. All through the book he endeavours to be fair to his opponent and tries to understand the case of the non-Pacifist Christian. But he never comes within sight of it. He never senses the soul of the non-Pacifist position. In his hands it somehow becomes a corpse. This book is a textbook of Pacifist casuistry. I don't mean casuistry in the bad sense. Cadoux is far above that, but in the sense that it is a lifeless presentation of the problem in terms of mere logic.

Let me give a few examples.

On pp. 103-4 he argues that the world is full of independent states which are "safe because they do not invite aggression. *The fact is so palpable that there is no need to specify examples*" (my italics, D.R.D.). Would you believe it! Let me use some of my valuable space to give a list of them: Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Greece, Albania, Rumania, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Finland, Latvia, Esthonia, China, Abyssinia and Spain. (Did the People's Front Government of 1936 invite German and Italian intervention?) To this list of "safe" states Cadoux may answer that they were invaded after his book was written, which was very inconsiderate of Hitler. How could Cadoux, living in the Europe of 1933-40, be so blind as to think that *any* European state was safe from aggression? Did you ever come across such a political innocent?

On the same page (104) he says there is hardly ever a case of war where the right is all on one side and the wrong on the other. So what? Well, then, you must carefully apportion the blame. But Cadoux does admit that there have been wars of unprovoked aggression in the past. And—believe it or not—he goes back to the Book of Judges for an example, which he describes as "a pathetic example . . . and it is not inconceivable that such might occur again" (p. 105). There's a perspicacious man for you, where distant horizons are concerned. I presume this book was not written before 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria; or before 1935, when Italy invaded Abyssinia.

But let us be just; the responsibility was not wholly Japan's or Italy's.

The book is crammed with equally fantastic examples of a political unrealism which beggars belief. Cadoux is in no better case when he comes to the display of moral realism. His sentimentalism is white, " too white; for the rose of life is red ".

His argument for Christian pacifism, which for so painstaking a thinker is unusually disjointed, boils down to this: that participation in war is incompatible with the Christian ethic. He fortifies his argument by five tests, each one of which strengthens his basic position. They are: the general sense of the Christian community that war is wrong; the utterance of the Christian heart; the example and teaching of Jesus; the Christian doctrine of the character of God (*vide* pp. 62-90); and the argument from expediency. It is on these five propositions that he bases his case.

Behind all this is the assumption that the alternative to participating in war by fighting or making munitions (he allows great latitude as regards other activities by a specious process of logic-chopping) *is* compatible with Christian ethic. If you fight or make munitions, you cannot be loyal to Christ—*i.e.*, Cadoux cannot. He doesn't judge anybody. But though one is involved in the whole process, and what one does (nursing wounded, farming, etc.) is part of the total national effort to wage war, nevertheless one can be loyal to Christ. To work on the land, *e.g.*, an alternative to fighting, is Christian. So Cadoux contracts out of social responsibility. *This is the fact behind all the qualifying logic.* What society does with his property or his service he is not responsible for. So by subjectively transcending objective society, Cadoux arrives at the position that there is, here and now, an alternative to war which is Christian.

But the one political fact he does not once face is *that the only alternative here and now to resisting Hitlerism by force of arms is submission to Hitler.* And he thinks that a Hitler victory will be much worse for the world than a British victory (p. 210). The only practicable alternative to fighting is a Hitler victory—*i.e.*, the worse thing. But Cadoux never faces this ugly fact. Instead, he wraps himself up in a cloud of sentimental verbosity. On the long view, Christian love is a better method for dealing with wrongdoing than war (p. 157); Nazi evils can only be finally abolished by the Christian spirit (p. 215), and so on *ad nauseam.*

But deeper than the political fact is the moral fact of original sin, which Cadoux regards as morbid, and so deludes himself he is being a Christian by doing whatever he is doing as an alternative to taking part in war. War, if you please, is not consistent with the Christian ethic. Of course it isn't. We don't need Cadoux to tell us that. But neither is our peace-time civilization consistent with the Christian ethic. The basic evil of man is will-to-power. War is just one manifestation of

it. Living on investments is another. There's some will-to-power, that deep, radical egotism, in the lectures Cadoux gives to his students. There's some in this review I am writing. But the Pacifist singles out one manifestation of that deep sin of man. He seems to be blissfully unaware of others. Whatever men do in an unregenerate society is bound to have some element of deep sin in it. They cannot be consistent with Christianity. But Cadoux doesn't believe this.

This is a most lamentable book. Its political unrealism is pathological. Its moral unrealism is even worse.

D. R. Davies.

The Realm of Spirit. By George Santayana. Constable. 16s.

This is the final volume of Professor Santayana's philosophical description of existence: and the faith which embarked on such a work has been rewarded by a continued and undimmed clarity of mind with which to complete it in advancing years. It comes to us as the legacy of a thinker always distinguished by a serene and cultured maturity, so that little is changed by the lengthening perspective of his later age. He writes with the old beauty and distinction, and with that spiritual wisdom which he draws from his Catholic origin and which so marks out his work from that of almost all academic philosophers. While they provide the mere tools of knowledge, he applies them also and acquaints us with the object. Thus the value of his work is not restricted to the correctness with which his categories are drawn, and those who disagree widely with what would ordinarily be called his philosophical conclusions may thank him for a closer vision of that about which philosophers debate.

If Professor Santayana speaks to this generation, it is by way of implicit contrast rather than of explicit address. He is not concerned to guide a world at war, but to correct a vulgar material activism with the lesson of full humanity and contemplative detachment: the values of Catholic culture made separable (as he supposes) from their supernatural foundation. These values are primarily the values of what he calls "spirit". This word holds a place midway between the German Geist or Greek *nus*, and the less intellectual, more moral notion of Christian spirituality.

Spirit is the principle of reflective consciousness or apperception, the presence of which differentiates man from the brute. It may seem to become on occasion the mere instrument of animal satisfaction, but it has an interest proper to itself—the impartial contemplation of all that is, and the appreciation of intrinsic values without regard to our personal concerns. Spirituality is achieved when spirit is allowed thus to pursue its own aims and be itself: when it escapes from the deadly "distractions" of the psyche or animal soul. This may suggest

asceticism or world-flight, but no—for spirit grows of necessity in a psychic soil—spiritual realizations simply occur where the proper psychic conditions are provided. Thus the achievement of spirituality is a psychic rather than a spiritual problem, and the relation of psyche to spirit is as much positive as negative. It is a question, not of denying, but of ordering and cultivating the psyche, if the fine flower of spirit is to be produced.

Perhaps the simplest way of expressing this doctrine is to say that it is *as though* spirit were a pure universal essence, neither mine nor yours nor any man's, waiting for and seizing the opportunities provided by any human psychic life anywhere in order to become incarnate and enjoy a momentary and full-blooded actuality. It is only *as though* this were so, for spirit is not actually anything, except in its moments of psychic actuality. Yet this Averrhoistic " as though " is a little more than a metaphor in the author's mind, for he can talk of the continuity and eternity of spirit, not mine or yours, but the spirit neither mine nor yours which finds expression in our present act, and will in the acts of many men after we are dead. This immortality appears nominal, a pathetic illusion of words, but finds some justification in the author's antique and fine-drawn doctrine of universal essences, about which it is not possible to say in simple terms that they are, or that they are not. They can exist fully in particular facts alone, yet what there comes to exist is regarded as having a kind of real, almost numerical, identity with other instances existing in other factual situations.

This " separation " of spirit as somehow something in itself is carried out on the dynamic plane, and it is here that the most direct and fundamental opposition to the Christian view of man's being arises. For, in the Christian view, will is the act of the spirit, or conscious reason, penetrating as it were the animal soul and directing the human machine by voluntary choice. Not so for Professor Santayana: he knows of will only in the impoverished sense of an urge that all things have to realize their natures and persist in their existences: the oak tree " wills " in this sense to unfold its buds in the spring. There is this interior dynamism in spirit, leading it to realize itself when and as far as it can: and in human psyche, because it is human, not only to be itself, but to provide the occasions of spirit. There are, then, psychic acts which are of such a kind that they will have a spiritual accompaniment; but there are no spirit-controlled psychic acts. Psyche conditions spirit, but not *vice versa*, so that the moral and responsible will, as Christianity knows it, is an impossibility, and the whole dynamic of human action, exterior and interior, can be turned over to the psychologist for exhaustive explanation.

The contrast of this doctrine with the Christian in the matter of the separability of the spiritual soul is curious: it denies the separability we assert, and asserts that we deny. It denies the discarnate individual spiritual soul capable of separate existence

in paradise: it asserts the separation of the incarnate spirit from its bodily life, precluding its control over it.

In a vexed age like ours, the will takes precedence over the intellect in men's concerns, and this aristocratic and Grecian apotheosis of the pure intelligence which does no work and never soils its hands in the market-place reads almost like an essay on the higher lotus-eating. But it is not without high moral values: its ideal of a selfless objectivity of mind and disinterested concern with being *qua* being is part at least of the moral truth and will always need to be preached. What remains obscure, as with all systems that deny responsible will, is the usefulness of preaching at all: for to what do we preach?

The system is logically atheistic. For the spirit, the very spirit that becomes actual in you and me, may be inhibited but cannot be corrupted: in so far as it functions it is pure, even when it is fettered to animal desire. Thus it is an absolute, the very actuality of rational perfection, manifested in divers portions and in divers manners. Whereas the Christian, seeing himself as a fallible and perverse spiritual soul, a will often abused and never pure, yet whose very principle it is to aspire after truth and perfection, looks up to that Supreme Being in whom truth and perfection are, without any variableness or shadow of turning.

AUSTIN FARRER.

HOLY IMAGES: AN INQUIRY INTO IDOLATRY AND IMAGE-WORSHIP IN ANCIENT PAGANISM AND IN CHRISTIANITY. By Edwyn Bevan. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d.

This book consists of four of the author's Gifford Lectures published separately as constituting a digression on a particular instance of the use of symbolism in religion and as possessing an interest for readers who might not be concerned with the more fundamental questions of the philosophy of religion discussed in the rest of the lectures (published under the title of *Symbolism and Belief*). Any book by Dr Bevan possesses an abundance of learning, combined with a clarity and felicity of expression which is all too rare in modern theology, and a candour and fairness which is perhaps even rarer. This book is no exception. He deals with the belief of the pagan mind as to the relation of the image to the deity, and the Jewish condemnation of idolatry as the worship of the work of men's hands, pointing out the curious appearance of pictures and images as forms of decoration in the synagogues of the rabbinical period; he goes on to the gradual introduction of images in the Church. Incidentally he brings forward some interesting evidence that the use of images was condemned by the Stoics; the defence of them in Dio Chrysostom and Maximus of Tyre implies that they are being condemned. My only criticism here is that he seems to me to be wrong in supposing that the belief that idols are inhabited by devils is

Christian rather than Jewish; the view that the gods of the heathen are devils is common in Judaism, and the association of the devils with the images of the gods was necessary in order to explain the miraculous properties claimed for particular images.

Dr Bevan concludes with a judicious summing-up of the controversy between Catholics and Protestants on the use of pictures and images. The value of such aids to devotion is that they impress the imagination of the worshipper and so make his religion more real to him (Dr Bevan thinks this value is not so great as usually supposed; he appeals to psychology, but I cannot agree with him here); the disadvantages are not only the obvious danger that some peculiar power may be supposed to reside in the particular image, but also that the image, being necessarily particular, gives an impression of a particular personality; where, however, as is normally the case, we do not know what the person portrayed really looked like, we may get a misleading impression. On the other hand, the disuse of images in Protestant worship has been accompanied by a loss of any vivid sense of the communion of Saints. Dr Bevan recognizes that St Paul's handkerchiefs and St Peter's shadow are an awkward point for the strict Protestant; for himself it would seem that he recognizes the æsthetic value of pictures and images, but holds that their directly religious value is less than Catholics would usually claim.

WILFRED L. KNOX.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE. By Alfred J. Ayer. Macmillan. 10s. 6d.

To judge from certain recent publications, there seems to be a notable bifurcation in the development of twentieth-century philosophy. In *Our Knowledge of God* Professor John Baillie quotes an impressive array of thinkers in support of the thesis that the most characteristic new departure of the present age is a reaction against the empiricist tradition derived from Descartes. It is now realized, he points out, that there exists no such creature as a solipsistic individual subject of sense experiences who from those experiences has to acquire knowledge of things other than himself and assure himself of the truth of that knowledge. Each human being comes into existence as a member of a society in which he is already related to his fellows, the corporeal world, and God, and he is never explicitly conscious of himself without being implicitly conscious of the other three. Moreover, his consciousness of God and of his fellow-men differs from his consciousness of the corporeal world in that he is conscious of them as being primarily subjects and not objects of experience. But side by side with this new departure in philosophy we are witnessing a sturdy revival of that very empiricism which it holds to be outmoded, and in this revival Mr Ayer is undoubtedly one of the most brilliant of its younger exponents.

For Mr Ayer the immediate objects of a man's experience are his sense-data, and the problem is to discover which of these may be accepted as mediating the existence of real material things, and on what grounds. His conclusion is that they are those which are systematically repeatable if the repetition depends on the observer's movements in a comparatively stable context. " It appears, then," he writes, " if my account of this matter is even substantially correct, that our conception of material things as having a continued and distinct existence in physical space, so far from involving any *a priori* intuition, can be derived from purely empirical and contingent features of our visual, tactual and kinæsthetic experiences " (p. 262).

It seems to me that in his analysis of the grounds which justify us in accepting sense-data as reliable guides to the nature of the external world Mr Ayer has done a fine piece of work and made a really valuable contribution to philosophical thought. The bald statement of his conclusion which I have given can give no idea of the thorough examination of the problem which precedes it, and of the lucidity with which he discusses various theories and arguments, and exposes and clears up various confusions of thought in the philosophical field. All this makes his book a delight to read and his conclusion convincing. But I cannot make head or tail of his further statement, quoted above, that the argument and its conclusion show that our conception of material things does not involve any *a priori* intuition.

To take only one example, it is clear that the method of establishing the reliability of sense-data involves the notion of similarity or sameness. The observer must be able to recognize a group of sense-data as resembling those previously sensed. And it is argued on p. 164 that a scientist is justified in accepting the reports of other observers if by testing the reliability of a sample of reports he satisfies himself that he can trust others which come from the same source. But the notions of similarity and sameness are as *a priori* as any notions can be. Again, Mr Ayer claims to have disposed of the *a priori* notion of causation as involving any necessary connexion in things. But surely he makes use of this notion when he makes one of his criteria of reliability the demand that the repetition of the sense-data should be " dependent upon " the observer's movement.

I do not myself think it possible to ignore the contribution of those thinkers to whom Professor Baillie calls attention. Not to mention God, it is indubitable that our animal ancestors ran about in herds before there ever supervened any human consciousness, so that when man first became conscious of himself it was as a member of a society inhabiting a material world, their relations being organized through " necessary connexions " which provided both their limits and their opportunities for his actions and thoughts. For man now to attempt to ignore all this and to see how far he can go in reconstructing his world on

the assumption that he starts as a solipsistic subject of sense-data is a fascinating parlour game in which Mr Ayer is a very skilful player. We who hold the Christian belief in God, and accept the world as God's creation, can welcome Mr Ayer's contribution with its acute insight into the methods by which the world is patient of the inductive investigations of the sciences and its clear exposition of their limitations. For when his argument is freed from the hallucination that it involves no *a priori* intuitions, and is set in the context of an intelligent theism, it is seen to be a brilliantly detailed elaboration of the Pauline maxim that in this world we walk by faith and not by sight.

LEONARD HODGSON.

A SHORT HISTORY OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. By F. Brittain. Heffer. 3s. 6d.

The natural piety felt by Cambridge men for their old College (it used to be said that an Oxford graduate would say, " I'm an Oxford man," a Cambridge, " I'm a Trinity man," or whatever his College might be) is always justified, but particularly so in the case of Jesus College. Historians can point to its unique origin: it has the oldest buildings in Cambridge, and the only ones to be planned on monastic lines. Are our tastes literary? Then we remember that Cranmer spent twenty-four years within the walls of the College, forming the style found in the Book of Common Prayer. And Laurence Sterne, Malthus, S. T. Coleridge are a notable trio of alumni. Sportsmen will cherish the athletic record, especially on the river. Jesus College ceased to be Head of the River in 1885. About 1902 one of the giants of old, Steve Fairbairn, came back from Australia and set himself to win back supremacy. He taught a new style, and by 1909 the College boat was head once more; from then to 1938, when he died, it was head more often than all other Colleges put together. When he began the College was very small; in 1899 there were only twenty freshmen. Such a result was a triumph of human personality.

Mr Brittain's book is also in its modest way a triumph. He says everything that needs to be said in sixty-four pages.

W. K. LOWTHER CLARKE.

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